

DISSENT

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FALL 1956

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DISSENT

We are particularly pleased this issue to welcome a whole group of new contributors to DISSENT. Czeslaw Milosz is the author of "The Captive Mind," one of the most brilliant books of our time, and more recently, "The Seizure of Power," a novel. We hope this first appearance in our pages will introduce frequent contributions from his pen... Michael Reagan is a young political scientist who has published previously in the "New Republic"... John Strachey is, of course, the famous British socialist and author of numerous books on Marxist theory... Dan Wakefield is a young writer who has contributed several articles to "The Nation;" he was recently in Israel, from where he sent dispatches to American journals... With his analysis of the crisis in the American Communist party, Michael Walzer, makes his first appearance in print; he will be spending the coming year in England as a graduate student... John Bennet is a psychologist by profession... Paolo Vittorelli is a young Italian socialist who writes to us from Rome... Paul Mattick, whom we did not introduce when last he appeared in our pages, is among the best-known of writers on socialist theory.

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To Our Readers:

The time has come to talk of—*survival*.

With this issue DISSENT is three years old. This itself—given the present political mood in America and the limitations of our resources—is something of a victory. But we have done more than merely stay alive. DISSENT has become established as the voice of democratic radicalism in the American intellectual world; if nothing else, the violence of the criticism and attacks to which it has been subjected would prove this. For many of its readers DISSENT has raised the idea of socialism from the level of a ritualistic observance or a fading memory to that of a living problem. DISSENT has provided analysis, discussion, comment, polemic on the major issues of the day from a variety of viewpoints within the general range of democratic radicalism. It has made its mark—though not yet sufficiently; it has found its place.

And we have done something else of which we are proud: we have kept our promises to our supporters. In our three years we have asked them for help only twice, first when we began and then two years ago. In our fund appeal in the fall of 1954 we said that if we came within striking distance of the quota, there would be no further solicitations during the next two years. That promise, with some difficulty, has been kept.

Now, very simply, without fanfare or hullabaloo, we must ask your help once more. Our regular income from subscriptions and newsstand sales brings in about half of our minimal expenditure. The other half must be raised through contributions.

We need for the next two years—\$6,000.

In the past the magazine has been carried mainly by a few people. Despite the fact that a considerable number of our readers contributed small sums two years ago, the main burden has been borne by the editors and a few close friends. Though the editors will again contribute as heavily in money as they give freely of their

time, we now feel obliged to say to our friends—and we feel that the quality of DISSENT permits us to say it frankly—

If we are to survive, you will have to help quickly and more generously than before.

DISSENT has built up a core of new writers, a body of loyal and friendly readers. They have helped in many ways, but they have not been sufficiently aware of the practical problems of the magazine—that is, they have not helped enough (perhaps because we did not ask them enough) in getting subscriptions, placing the magazine in stores, arranging for financial support.

Now we have to ask you for such help, and upon your answer depends the future of DISSENT. We shall not agitate or harass you, except to say that in our opinion it would be a tragedy for the ideas we hold in common if DISSENT could not continue.

But it will!

Again, we request pledges on a two-year basis; again we promise no further appeals if the quota is fulfilled; again we request that you pay as large a portion as possible of your pledge immediately. If you wish to, you can use part of your contribution for gift subscriptions.

DISSENT

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I pledge the sum of \$..... per year toward the DISSENT sustaining fund for each of the next TWO years.

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I enclose a list of names to whom I should like to have gift subscriptions sent at the rate \$2.50 per person, payment for these subscriptions to come out of the above contribution or be covered by the enclosed additional check.

DISSENT

VOLUME III NUMBER 4

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A QUARTERLY OF
SOCIALIST OPINION

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A LETTER TO PICASSO

Czesław Miłosz

This open letter to Picasso originally appeared in the June, 1956 issue of Preuves and is published with permission of both its author and the editors.

This letter to you, Picasso, is not a personal letter. You are a genius, hence a part of our human commonwealth in the same way as beautiful structures of past ages, the paintings of the Louvre, or the sound of music transmitted through the centuries. That you are alive among us is only an accident thanks to your fine constitution and the resistance of your arteries which have allowed you to reach a venerable age. It was also a providential accident that you did not belong to one of those racial or national groups destined to be destroyed, along with their potential Picassos.

Your achievement has transformed you into a symbol, but your preference for white or red wine, or for rare or well-done meat will quickly be forgotten. Nonetheless, you share our passions and our errors. Like each of us you are responsible for what happens on our planet and your particular responsibility is measured by the distance between your renown and the anonymity of ordinary citizens.

During the years when painting was systematically being destroyed in the USSR and the "people's democracies," you lent your name to manifestoes glorifying the régime of Stalin. At the same time, you scoffed at "socialist realism," thereby proving that certain artistic methods are valid only where the arm of the police is long enough. You were right to take advantage of your privilege, but you seem to forget that is all it was! If there exists a solidarity between men for whom beauty is more than a subject of esthetic considerations, you refused it. But are you absolutely sure that, because of this refusal, you did not rob some young painter of the joy contained in a life of creative fulfillment? Or are you absolutely sure that geniuses are born only in civilized countries and not among the barbarians east of the Elbe?

Let me give you an example. In 1948, while I was in the United States as a cultural attaché for the Polish "People's Democracy," I prepared an exhibition of gouaches painted by young children of my country. They were wonders of boldness and naive imagination; all

Continued on page 439

NOTES ON THE ELECTIONS

It is all beginning again. Ike is beaming and putting; Adlai dodging and quipping; Estes preparing to shake several million hands; and Dick, that Devil's darling of the liberals, has turned tame, his gift for nastiness suppressed in preparation for a "high level" campaign.

It is a commonplace that American elections often tend to conceal and blur issues. Our cult of personality, the amorphous social and ideological composition of the parties, the burden of regional and state traditions, the built-in expectation that campaigns consist mainly of nonsense, and (more recently) the tendency to transform the more or less spontaneous bunkum of American politics into a carefully manipulated and pre-tested branch of advertising—such factors have frequently buried issues amid a clatter of confusion and noise.

But never as much as in 1956. The issues facing the country have been obliterated by 1) techniques of diversion that stress irrelevancies and trivia (a president "who's always on the job") or 2) occasionally deliberate and occasionally unconscious blunting of all political edges, so that the real differences of interest and opinion that cut so deeply through our society get lost amid compromise and rhetoric.

In the imperiled and revolutionary world of the mid-twentieth century,

"moderation" is a state of political paralysis induced by a bad case of compromise and aggravated by creeping cant; it means a failure to sense the terrible danger, as well as the opportunities, presented by the changes and crises in the Communist world.

Consider the matter of foreign policy. Both foreign policy planks are a hopeless muddle, a willed failure to understand—let alone cope with—the nature of the modern world; but if anything the Democratic plank, because it revives the half-forgotten Dulles demagoguery of the Republicans four years ago, is a shade the worse. As the *New Republic*, perhaps the last liberal journal in the country not to suffer disenchantment with Stevenson, has put it: "the [Democratic] foreign affairs plank . . . is a dishonest conglomeration of irrelevancies and inaccuracies which no administration could live by in the hydrogen age."

AT THIS POINT both parties appear bloated, utterly without principle. On top of this dull self-satisfied heap presides the Tranquillizer-in-Chief dispensing bromides and homilies like a country horse doctor. Perhaps the best word about him, at least as an individual political figure, has been said by Charlie Hennessey in *The Last Hurrah* who, watching him on TV, shouts back at the screen:

No capacity! No capacity whatsoever! A square peg in a round hole! Great on a parade ground: hup, two three four! Oh, marvelous! But in the White House! Mother of God, save us all from Fort Riley, Kansas! Oh, pitiful, pitiful!

Ike is both the product and shaper of American society today. Whether under the name of liberal conservatism, conservative liberalism, neo-liberalism or any other such hodge-podge, Ikeism is the very color of the nation's political soul, and almost as much so of the opposition as of the party in power. Ikeism represents a sublime faith in the powers of drift; a belief that our prosperity is eternal and ordained; an utter refusal to see the great gaping holes in the fabric of that prosperity; a profound unwillingness of the nation to face the bitter realities of its international position. And what is Adlaimism fast becoming but Ikeism with a touch of literacy and intelligence?

One of the most interesting political tendencies of the moment is the way in which the dominant leaderships of both parties keep moving closer toward one another; in the night of "moderation" all cats are grey.

If liberal conservatism is to be the keynote, say the more intelligent Republicans, particularly the bright young Undersecretary of Labor Larson, why not Ike's moderation? The *New Republic's* Washington correspondent, T.R.B., reports that Ike plans to "re-form" his cabinet after the election, dropping Charlie Wilson and Sinclair Weeks, replacing Herbert Hoover Jr., generally taking a more "progressive" posture. For Ike "is getting a bit fed up with businessmen as politicians. He feels that he will not be so dependent on the Old Guard in his second term."

While Ike prepares to put a bit more stress on the liberal in his liberal conservatism, Adlai has begun to put a great deal more stress on the conservative in his conservative liberalism. His very nomination, brought about by a tacit alliance between the Southern reactionaries and the Northern machines with the liberal-labor bloc tagging behind, made this perfectly clear; for whatever illusions the liberals have about Stevenson are of their own making; he cannot be charged with pretending to be anything but what he is.

The *New Republic's* T.R.B. has said that Stevenson "has to tell the nation that peace and prosperity aren't enough, that the time calls for greatness." Very well. What better place to call for greatness than at the convention of his own party and in regard to the most burning domestic issue of the day, the one issue that poses an unambiguous challenge to human conscience? But Stevenson's calculated opportunism in wooing the South on the matter of civil rights for Negroes, showed anything but greatness.

And, let it be remembered, the majority plank—which Roy Wilkins of the NAACP rightly described as "totally meaningless" and Joe Rauh of the ADA called "a step backward"—came into being as a result of the collaboration between the pro- and the anti-Stevenson forces: it won the approval of Stevenson's spokesmen, it won the approval of Truman, it won the approval of Mrs. Roosevelt, who also contributed her bit of cant when she urged upon the Negroes "the wisdom of leadership for the whole country, and not for any particular group alone." This was the plank which Murray Kempton so bitterly

and accurately described as "a fix," which Walter Reuther described as "a broad sociological observation robbing America of the credentials it needs to lead in the free world."

A time for greatness, indeed!

STEVENSON has said that he will go to the people with the issues. But this is the great weakness of the Democrats. Precisely at a time when national life seems stalled, issues must be related to fundamentals, to basic premises. If they do not have a vital quality to them, they shrivel up. But the Democrats evaded, not debated, the great questions. Desegregation, civil liberties, foreign policies, economic problems—all were shunted aside. Above all, no conflict. A platform made up of splinters and fragments, each directed at a group or a region on the lowest political level.

It is sometimes said that in this moment of soft prosperity there really are no issues and that it is therefore impossible for an opposition to arouse interest by trying to raise them. In the first part of Michael Reagan's article which appears in this *DISSENT* (p. 346), enough issues are sketched out to keep anyone genuinely interested in them busy for a very long time. No issues—in a country where 30 million people belong to families with incomes below \$2,000 a year; where the farm problem has become chronic and deep-rooted; where the problem of education is a national scandal; where more and more "pockets" of economic sickness plague the life of no one knows how many people; where the cost of living is again rising and economists begin to express renewed fears of inflation; where civil liberties... but enough.

Yet it would be a mistake to suppose that the surface of "moderation"

which covers American political life is all that matters, or even the most important thing to consider. Despite certain superficial appearances, and the vast literature of the new American celebration, our society has not achieved a state of equilibrium or stasis. The model of a "mass society" is extremely valuable, but one must remember that any model, by its very nature, tends to create a static picture of what is actually a process of constant movement and change.

Undeniably, both parties are thoroughly outmoded and incapable of facing up to the tasks of American life. But this does not mean that political developments have ground to a halt in a kind of nightmare of comfort. Clashes continue to take place, issues to intrude themselves. In the past, new parties were created in America after and during periods of painful transition: the pre-Jacksonian and the pre-Civil War periods are classic examples. It is possible that we are now going through the beginnings of similar developments, and that what seems like an unparalleled agreement in national life is but the preparation for new struggles and new alignments. Consider just a few of the explosive possibilities: Can the Negroes moderate their drive for equality and recognition? Can the labor leadership keep buying political compromise when a victory for "their" party will not lead, according to their own expectations, to the repeal of the Taft-Hartley Act? Can the bloc of regional, political, social and class groups which makes up the Democratic party survive what seems likely to be another defeat?

And even if we examine the campaign issues as stated or hinted at by the two parties, there is more than meets the eye. For all its demagoguery

and triviality, the Democratic talk about a "full time or part time president" does touch upon a significant issue that is related to the American governmental tradition: the role and functioning of the Presidency. Socialists have concerned themselves very little with the exact functioning and mechanisms of government, to the present regret of at least some of us. But to dismiss the nature of the Presidency as a mere cliché of political science textbooks or as a problem internal to capitalism and hence of no interest to us, seems unwise at a time when so much rests upon the way this executive power is handled. If in the long run the tendency has been for the executive branch to extend its role and powers vis à vis the legislative authority, the immediate tendency of the Eisenhower administration has been to yield this extended power to shadowy cliques of faceless administrators who have no responsibility to anyone but "the Chief" and who thus come to constitute a kind of ruling regency. Precisely because of the prevalence of the first, long-range tendency is this immediate development within the Eisenhower administration so important. And it is an issue that has not even begun to be explored.

THE DEMOCRATS contain within themselves some of the groups that can act with decision and boldness to break up the log-jam of compromise and evasiveness which afflicts American politics. For a time at least, a good many of the underlying social and political struggles that continue to take place within American life will find their most dramatic, though hardly most principled, reflection within the Democratic party.

The tragedy is that the labor-

liberal bloc has not shown any political forthrightness or courage in the summer of 1956. The very fact that it had tied itself so unconditionally to Stevenson gave the Southerners considerable room for maneuver. Stevenson could count on Walter Reuther; but he had to court Senator Johnson and Senator Eastland. Where the labor-liberal bloc within the Democratic party had put up a certain ruckus in 1952, its representatives, writes ADA leader David Williams in the *New Leader*, "went so far as to offer to drop the floor fight [at the Democratic convention] if the pledge of Federal legislation was added to the plank (thus bringing it *back* to the 1952 level) and were willing not to insist on the pledge to carry out the Supreme Court decisions." They were, says Williams, "reasonable men." As if on *this* issue a man of honor could be anything but "unreasonable!"

And the result, predictably, was that, even by contrast with 1952, the liberal-labor bloc collapsed; it lacked any long-range perspective, any short-range militancy, anything but an unconditioned desire to have Stevenson as its nominee. As Williams tells us, it went to the Democratic convention in a mood of compliance and therefore—rightly enough—it was treated with contempt. The civil rights fight (a more accurate word would be, retreat) "had to be waged," writes Williams, "from the wings of the Convention. Its leaders [i.e., of the labor-liberal bloc] were locked out of the Committee sessions, and they did not sit on the floor of the Convention as delegates. With a few honorable exceptions... the most influential delegates showed none of the fighting spirit which was so evident in Kefauver's victory."

Not so long ago, Walter Reuther said that "you cannot have Mr. Eastland and have us at the same time." Well, Stevenson has them both, and on terms that hardly do credit to the fighting spirit of anyone but Eastland.

And yet, as we have said, the problems remain, the issues will survive November 6, the alignments of politics are not forever frozen, and for those who will be perceptive enough to see them and courageous enough to fight for them, new possibilities for creative—which is to say, in the most fundamental and least dogmatic sense, radical—politics will again arise.

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For whatever importance it has, the question of voting in 1956 remains. The editors of *DISSENT*, while agreeing that in terms of radical politics this question is relatively unimportant, do not agree on the answer. It may interest our readers if we briefly sketch the two opinions.

Given the absence of any significant radical movement in the United States, the problem of how to vote becomes, for radicals, a matter of personal decision. In terms of any socialist perspective or politics, a victory for either party's candidates would signify no real or significant gain.

Some of us believe that, since the two parties remain committed to a society whose fundamental assumptions and values we reject and since the two parties have failed to take a forthright stand on the one burning issue of national conscience (Negro rights), there is no reason to support either candidate. These editors either will not vote or will vote for one of the minor party socialist candidates,

not in the belief that the latter represents any significant "protest" but simply as a matter of individual sentiment and conscience.

A few other editors believe that, without illusion or enthusiasm, a vote for Stevenson is at least conceivable. This on the admittedly limited and "private" grounds that it may affect the character of the new Congress; that Nixonism represents a genuine menace; and that Stevenson might be more apt to behave intelligently in making decisions concerning foreign policy. What the editors with this point of view would stress, however, is not so much the actual vote but the need for closely observing and, if possible, intervening in the struggles that will continue to take place within the make-shift structure of American politics.

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One word more. We are sometimes taxed with being mere critical bystanders unable to influence the course of American politics. There is a sense of course in which this is true. However, this criticism obscures the profounder truth that the fundamental way to "influence" American politics in a sense meaningful for us is by working toward a radical reconstruction of American life. That is why all of us are convinced that the most important task in politics today is to analyze what is happening about us in terms of a radical perspective; to bring to bear upon American life the criticism that follows from democratic and socialist values; to speak the blunt truth, as we see it, about issues and problems that are almost universally neglected and obscured.

IRVING HOWE

STANLEY PLASTRIK

AMERICA AS A "MASS SOCIETY"

Michael Reagan

The one issue that seems most important this year to politicians and public alike is the President's Health. If the apparent lack of substantive issues means that the major difference between the parties lies in the names of the candidates and not in their attitudes toward the use of government in solving social problems, then one or a combination of two conclusions must follow. The first is that the American people are so uniformly content that there simply does not exist a sufficient degree of popular disagreement to sustain a political debate between the parties. The other possibility is that all is not sweetness and light but that for a variety of reasons the existing disagreements are not being handled by the political system, are not being raised to the surface of our rather murky and obscurantist campaign.

This writer believes the second of the two alternatives to hold the lion's share of truth, and the remainder of this article will be an effort to speculate on the nature and significance of the reasons why this campaign has mainly been a campaign of silence. Before plunging into our analysis of the political system's ills as of 1956, however, let us take a brief and merely suggestive inventory of the issues that could be raised this year if anyone wanted to rock the boat.

The Missing Issues

In terms of the political system's consequences for the distribution of wealth and power, perhaps the issue of greatest immediate concern should be the increasing amalgamation of economic and political power centers under the excuse of a permanent semi-war economy and the impetus of an Administration "sympathetic to the needs of business."

A tradition of economic autonomy which permits decisions directly affecting the level of economic activity (i.e., of joblessness, if one wants to be blunt) to be made privately and without public accountability on the mythical grounds that corporate managers have no power, is dangerous enough in itself. But tying such a system to the government, so that these same managers are able to regulate the economic policies of the very institution that is supposed to enforce a publicly debated conception of responsibility upon the productive agencies of the society, is much more dangerous. It gives the color of public policy

and the sanction of government to decisions made by one class. These tendencies are reinforced by the increased use of "political outsiders" (C. Wright Mills' term for men whose values have been shaped by non-governmental activities, primarily economic).

What we are closer to today than ever before (and it should horrify the sincere free enterprisers, if there are any left) is a form of "state socialism" (or state capitalism) possessing a large monolithic potential with few of its democratic and equalitarian potentialities realized at all. If that isn't a sufficient basis for a lively political struggle, what is it? But if it has been covered in the campaign of 1956, it has been covered the wrong way: with a lid to keep it quiet.

Another issue that seems to have escaped the attention of our political crusaders is the serious maldistribution of income still existing in the United States. The capital gains tax and the expense account have become the answer of union and corporate executives to the income tax, and a rather effective answer they have been. Despite what the wealthy furiously deride as "confiscatory taxation" the top fifth of income receivers in 1951 managed to hold onto 42 per cent of total wages and salaries while the bottom fifth received 3 per cent—the same share of national income it had received in 1939. (Of course the same percentage is a larger dollar amount now.) Greater productivity, we are told in the pseudo-liberal rhetoric of business, means an upward leveling of incomes; some millions of Americans have yet to see the process work. Will they perhaps some day demand that the program live up to its advance billing?

The fields of health, education and welfare deserve some attention, too. And of course they have received it: haven't we a Department of H, E & W now? The President himself has acted. To improve the existing system of medical pre-payment insurance he proposed a re-insurance scheme that few understood and fewer wanted. Learning that school construction was lagging for lack of local funds, he called a White House Conference on Education—which told him that school construction was lagging for lack of local funds. A bill was proposed. Republicans and Southern Democrats saw to its death, with little urging to the contrary from the President, who was then convalescing from the ileitis attack. (On the other hand, it is interesting to note that his convalescence did not preclude the Administration from applying very urgent and successful pressure on the Senate to prevent a public dam at Hell's Canyon, just two weeks after the school aid bill was abandoned without a fight. Apparently the private-public utilities have more influence than the children!) One of the few notable achievements of the current year has been the extension by Congress of the social security system to the totally disabled, a move totally disapproved by the Administration. Public housing has as usual been paid little more than lip service. Period.

The area of industrial relations, too, has its problems. Among the most crucial are automation and the guaranteed annual wage. The pre-

dicted disruptive effects of the first are being totally ignored. (In the long run, more jobs may be created than abolished; in the short run, why worry: managers and union leaders won't lose their jobs, only rank and file workers.) The many real problems involved in an effort to offer the wage worker some semblance of the income enjoyed by the salaried employee are being treated as strictly a matter for corporate managers and unions to settle by private bargaining.

And what of this prosperity we have had since World War II? Is it an unmixed blessing? It seems to be a curiously selective phenomenon. Texas oil men are enjoying it tremendously; steel and auto workers have benefited somewhat. Public servants (both elective and civil service), teachers, small businessmen and many salaried professionals, farmers, Negroes, textile workers and pensioners, among others, have sometimes suffered. Most urban families have appliances and gadgets beyond the wildest dreams of twenty-five years ago; but most of them are up to their ears in debt and frantic from trying to live up to the dream-world of advertising. To the tune of thirty-five billion dollars per year prosperity rests upon expenditures for massive destruction. A man used to be able to support his wife and family; now the expected standard of living (including college education for his children) requires that the man carry two jobs or that his wife also work. Neither situation is calculated to improve family life or reduce the divorce and juvenile delinquency rates. Our prosperity has given us no sense of security: unlike Porgy, we got plenty of somethin' and we're scared someone's going to rob us while we're out a-makin' more.

For a people with a traditionally moralistic approach to international politics, it is a sad commentary on the state of the nation that the only reminder of the moral issues involved in nuclear warfare has come in an Army paper disputing the strategic concepts of the Air Force. Today it is hard to recall that in 1945 debate was widespread and vigorous over the moral justification of the first A-bomb. Surely a "crash program" in preparation for a war we are told would be horrible beyond belief is not the only foreign policy strategy we could devise. Yet none other has been seriously discussed.

Government promotion of corporate power, maldistribution of income, inadequate medical and educational facilities, a haphazard introduction of automation and guaranteed annual wage plans without public participation in the decisions, the dubious aspects of uneven and unstable prosperity, and a bipartisanship of massive fear in our foreign policy—these are a few of the issues that could make the campaign a vital, absorbing and meaningful exercise of democracy. Why the silence? Why have ileitis and the price of hogs so completely monopolized the debate thus far?

Many answers can be suggested, some immediate and ephemeral, some structural and fundamental. The deeper ones I think are connected with four facets of our industrial civilization:

- 1) Continued prosperity and its reinforcement of competitive laissez-faire myths surrounding the heritage of abundance;
- 2) The increasing scope of large-scale, hierarchic organizations;
- 3) Ideologies and new centers of power; and,
- 4) Changes in the technology and control of the means of communication, which constitute the primary extra-governmental means for securing social power.

By-products of prosperity

Among the more widely held assumptions of the free enterprise creed is the dogma that the system creates prosperity, but that poverty—a rare occurrence anyway—is always the fault of the individual, never of the system. A supposedly naturally beneficent system and a built-in excuse for occasions when it does not work combine to foreclose much potential criticism. The benefits of prosperity are said to outweigh any hesitations we might have about the inequalities of distribution, the economic and psychic wastes of planned obsolescence and status competition, and the pursuit of a materially defined success goal which is held out to all but achievable only by a few.

One reason why our national “plant” is running down while private plant construction hits new peaks each quarter may lie in the changed social positions of certain groups. Much of our educational, medical and social welfare costs as a nation were once borne by wealthy individuals, especially those whose wealth was pre-industrial and whose personal style of life included a sense of social obligation borrowed from continental traditions. The progressive income tax and steady inflation have done much to decrease the ability of this group to provide social needs through private philanthropy. Witness the current financial crisis of privately endowed colleges.

Both the newly rich and the fairly well-off (compared with before the New Deal) unionized workers of heavy industry are using their unaccustomed wealth for private goals. It's the first chance they have had to enjoy the “American standard of living” which they have been trained by national advertising to expect; and they lack the old aristocracy's tradition of public responsibility. Consequently, they don't take a hand in private provision for social needs and they resent taxation for social purposes. It is regrettable, but I think true, that not only the businessman who accentuates production of consumer goods for profit, but the laborer and the white collar worker who produce for wages must share the blame for the debilitating effects of prosperity.

As we suggested in describing the issues that could be raised, but haven't been, the prosperity we have been discussing is not universally or evenly distributed. But this is hidden to some extent by a technical change: the rise of macro-analysis to the forefront of academic economics. Most public discussion of the state of the economy today employs concepts of gross national product and national income. Thus when we read that gross national product for the first quarter of 1956

was at annual rate of 400 billion dollars we are naturally impressed. If economists dealt more in the components and group differentials within the overall figures, if they measured the economy in terms of, say, relative changes in income classes or the bankruptcy rate in small business, a different picture would be presented. I do not mean to imply a plot to portray a rosy picture—at least not on the part of professional economists who use national income analysis because it is strategic for certain types of problems. But I do think it is undeniable that an unintended consequence of the new economics is to hide the regional, occupational and class divergences that may be contained within what is unquestionably a high over-all figure.

Bigness takes over

In the production of goods, in sports, in transportation, in pre-chosen reading from book clubs and in network T-Viewing, and in political action—in most of the activities of modern America—ours is an age of large-scale organization. Survival has become a precarious proposition for the individual enterpriser or independent professional man or the small organization, be it a manufacturing concern, a magazine or one-elephant circus. Economically, the dominance of large-scale organization is easily demonstrated if one contrasts the increasing profitability of Big Industry with the decreasing profits and increasing bankruptcy rate of small manufacturers. Politically, too, organization counts. The Farm Bureau Federation (big) receives more cordial treatment from Congress and President than does the Farmers Union (smaller). The American Medical Association and the National Association of Real Estate Boards (organized) *versus* the consumers of medicine and housing (unorganized) have not been even matches either.

In Congress and the clientele agencies of the Executive, the unorganized are the unrepresented. And the unrepresented are by definition unable to force their choice of issues onto the political process. The development of group-power centers has thus been accompanied by a lessening of power among the people at large. Electoral mandates, even when they can reasonably be said to exist, more often than not give way to group vetoes in the attempt to realize them: the groups are organized; the electorate is not.

In discussing the political effects of large-scale organization, we should not neglect the internal structure of such institutions. In administrative organizations (as opposed to legislative units) we may hypothesize that the larger and more complex the organization, the greater is the degree to which power will be centralized at the top on hierarchic principles. Large-scale organization means directly increased need for coordination to be imposed on the parts if an integrated whole is to result.

The power of the coordinators who are necessarily at the top of the hierarchy, is increased by another characteristic of such organizations: they are single-function, permanent goal institutions. That is, a

manufacturing concern is expected to have but one goal: the production of goods for profit. This goal is "given" in the very act of establishing the organization. It is not one to be discussed and modified by the members; their roles are adjusted to the corporation, not the uses of the corporation to the goals of the members. The same in fact is true of labor unions, despite their formally more democratic structure.

Is it not possible that even the desire, let alone the ability, to share in political decision making may atrophy through the continued impact of simply receiving decisions made from above in one's economic activities? To say that it hasn't happened yet may not be a complete rebuttal, since we are still living on the cultural capital of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when a man's political independence was encouraged by his economic independence as family farmer, journeyman craftsman, or independent businessman. Whether the dependent, paternalistic, authoritarian life of modern economic institutions is compatible with independent, self-reliant, democratic political institutions may still be an open question, but it is surely a question.

The role specialization of large-scale organizational life may also have undemocratic consequences to the extent that it means increased psychic isolation and increased class stratification based upon occupational stratification. The worker and the boss knew each other and each other's work in the two-man carriage shop. In the automobile plant of today the worker may not even understand what others on the same rank level are doing, how the operation he performs contributes to a tangible result, or what the Big Boss looks like. Add to this the psycho-social isolation induced by the complexity of urban living; add the authoritarian implications of large-scale organization; then the apathy of voters and the failure of the political system to stimulate discussion of substantial issues become increasingly understandable.

Democracy may need daily practice to maintain the personality structure it requires; the individual may need a style of life and a set of institutions that are not now present in order to make a successful transition from nineteenth century individual democracy to mass democracy of the twentieth century. In his present powerless, dependent position, and lulled by abundance, what stimulus has the individual to participate in or care about the political affairs of the nation?

New power; old ideology

The rise of large-scale private organizations has created a new class of power wielders. Labor union leaders, corporate managers, farm bloc leaders, publishers of major newspapers and newspaper chains, and the élite of the mass entertainment media comprise this group. As the size and financial resources of organizations have increased, the power of their top men has grown correspondingly, since power is typically institutional rather than personal in origin. Because in many areas a few very large units have replaced many small ones, power is concen-

trated and maximized in oligopolistic systems where it was once dispersed and minimized.

But the existence of new sources of power does not in itself create our problem. The political institutions of democracy have successfully tamed to the uses of civilization many forms of power once equally formidable. The problem arises because of an ideological complication: that our rhetoric, political as well as economic, continues to assume the broad dispersion and decentralization of power in the society.

Had we recognized the new forms of power as they arose, we could now be in the stage of institutionalizing new means of social control to bring the twentieth century power groups into the system of political accountability. But ideology dies hard, particularly when (almost by definition) widespread recognition of its lack of correspondence to reality would be the end of its usefulness as a defense of privileged position. And the consequence of hanging onto our anachronistic ideologies has been the rather successful process of delusion through which we continue to deny that any group other than the central organs of government does or even can constitute a dangerous repository of power. We are therefore still in the stage of discovering the extent and significance of private power derived from large-scale organizations and of political functions being exercised by economic institutions.

It might be said that American political ideas are largely analogies drawn from classical economic theory. One of the major points of the analogy is the extension of the assumption of economic competition to the realm of politics.

Checks and balances, separation of powers, federalism, and similar clichés of American political thought, which were once thought to have as their primary function the fragmentation of governmental power, are now at least as widely used to support the proposition that no single class, no single group outside the government, can wield any substantial power over the government and the political decisions of the society. The typical explanation is that the multiplicity of governmental bodies represent a diversity of regions, interests and social classes such that all must compromise their demands in the interest of the public at large: an automatic balance of social forces impinging on politics. The bargaining conception of American politics, best developed by Robert Dahl, is probably the most sophisticated version of this theory. What is usually ignored in explications of this "power, power, who has the power" game is the substantial identity of interest among the supposedly competing groups. Granting that the identity is not universal and that a good deal of competition does occur on the level of splitting up the spoils, it seems to be true nevertheless that most of the organized interest groups are producer-oriented. Our whole culture is so committed to the trickle down theory of economic development favored by those at the top that not only do the various producer interests share a community of purpose in the political arena, but much of the public mistakenly assumes itself to be part of the in-group.

In this situation, what may look on the surface like great diversification and an ideal set-up for competition of political values turns out to be a monolithic system in which those on top meet no effective check from below. And this is strongly reinforced by the fact that the lower status segments of the population are much less organized than the upper, organization being the key to political effectiveness in a mass democracy.

We have just been speaking of what happens within the political arena as a result of the growth of power groups whose power is hidden by a fog of ideological rhetoric. What is perhaps an even more disturbing aspect of these groups is the extent to which they are able to by-pass the explicit political system in making decisions which have a wide impact on that society. In the concepts of "trusteeship" and "welfare capitalism" advanced by the *Fortune* school of enlightened (i.e., public relations conscious) businessmen we have another illustration of the way in which our rhetoric encourages the irresponsible exercise of unrecognized power. For it is through these concepts that corporate leaders are taking over political functions and welding political power without admitting to public scrutiny of their judgments.

Among the types of decisions which by virtue of their impact on the community may be termed "political" are: the rate of plant expansion expenditures in the nation as a whole; the relative proportions of earnings used for capital improvements, dividends, product improvement, and wage increases; the re-location of plants which may be the sole economic activity in a community; the judgment of employees' loyalty to the nation; the right to a job; and the provisions made for retirement of employees, for the social costs of automation, and for the character of within-the-plant life, particularly as regards the degree of employee participation in decisions.

By way of illustration, consider General Motors' announcement during the 1954 "rolling readjustment" of a billion dollar expansion program. Because the announcement inspired confidence and reassured fellow industrialists of the "basic soundness" of the economy, it was widely heralded as economic statesmanship of a high order. But what if GM had announced that it was shelving plant expansion plans until the economic clouds had blown away? If GM's lead had been followed in that direction, we might have had a major depression resulting from the decision made by one industrial concern.

When decisions as crucial as this to the general welfare are made outside of the democratic processes by which the citizen is supposed at least to share in shaping his own destiny, then the political system becomes less significant than the economic institutions of the society. It is this lag between the traditional scope of political accountability and the development of new centers of power that explains in good part the apparent lack of relationship between the nation's major problems and the issues receiving political attention.

Imperfect competition in ideas

Early in July, Secretary of Defense Wilson ordered several thousand military officers in the Washington area to wear civilian clothes on the job. The published reports of the edict asserted that Wilson's purpose was to play down the conspicuous role now being played in national policy making by the military. The order was rescinded as quickly as issued, but on the grounds that the President sympathized with the officers concerned over the expense of double wardrobes. No one seemed to be bothered by the attempt to delude the public regarding the enlarged scope of military power in political affairs.

This is but the most recent example of the public relations approach to politics, an approach that is rapidly supplanting the description of problems and discussion of real issues as the standard content of political campaigns. The public relations approach is the opposite of the problem-solving approach which a rational democratic process requires. Given substantial evidence that a conflict of interests exists over the distribution of income, or that the Western alliance is falling apart at the seams, public relations technique calls for denial of the conflict, expressions of natural harmony, and boastful statements that great advances are being made in our diplomatic efforts.

Although politicians have always been amateur psychologists and no political system has ever been an exercise of pure reason, there is an element in the situation today which makes the "engineering of consent" more effective and more dangerous than before. The political powerholders are now able, through polling, to diagnose the attitudes of the public with an accuracy hitherto unattainable; and to play upon those attitudes, through mass media techniques adapted from commercial merchandising practice, so as to direct them in the support of the powerholders' wants. (See Stanley Kelley's *Professional Public Relations and Political Power* for some exasperating case studies.)

To the extent that the public relations approach succeeds, the political process loses much of what little rationality it ever possessed. And the real problems and real struggles for power will be ever more obscured.

Concentration of control, and a consequent drying up of vehicles for the expression of deviant minority opinion, has proceeded rapidly in the communications industry. The number of cities served by more than one daily newspaper has declined and is declining; AP, UP and INS have largely replaced individual reporters for most newspapers; among the small town weeklies, many are identical products of centrally produced boiler plate in all but a few pages; and the tradition of a strongly opinionated, provocative editorial has given way to a page of platitudes which says nothing and is read by no one. These are important changes in the printed press, but the significance of that medium has declined in proportion as the newer media of service magazines, radio, television and films have grown. These are the true mass media which are transforming public opinion into mass opinion.

In the nineteenth century many men were producers as well as consumers of opinion on public affairs; today all but a small segment of the population are merely consumers. The result is that, unlike the classic democratic community in which public discussion precedes and affects official decisions, our society is becoming one in which "discussion" is a euphemism for public reiteration of propaganda disseminated through mass media. (See C. Wright Mills' *The Power Elite* for elaboration of the public vs. mass dichotomy.)

So well accepted has this process become that its successful application to a policy one approves is cause for congratulation by sophisticated and quite ethical observers; an example can be found in a recent (and in all other respects excellent) book on the genesis of the Marshall Plan in which the author describes the strategy sessions at which the proper "pitch" for "selling" the plan to the public was decided upon, and implies his approval of the result, since it worked. What is interesting here is that he saw no need to comment on the process, which was one in which the appeals that could be made were discussed largely apart from their correspondence to fact. Only effectiveness mattered. This sort of approach to informing the public, which has become standard operating procedure in recent years, suggests that E. H. Carr was not exaggerating when he wrote that

The spectacle of an efficient élite maintaining its authority and asserting its will over the mass by the rationally calculated use of irrational methods of persuasion is the most disturbing nightmare of mass democracy.

The politicians of both parties (particularly the holders of national office), the political pundits of the press, and those private individuals and organizations who have ready access to the mass media are the persons who must pose the problems and the alternatives if political debate is to get off the ground. When their interest is to shut off debate, to impose an unreal uniformity of opinion and foreclose challenges to their stewardship by declaring all problems solved, as seems to have been the case since World War II, then the result will be what we have this year: a politics of silence, a campaign without issues.

The Presidency is the strategic point in the political system for educating the public to an awareness and consideration of issues. It is on the Presidency that political attention focuses; it is only the Presidency that receives close scrutiny in the nation's press; and the President and Vice-President are the only office holders elected by the entire nation.

Eisenhower's "markedly non-political posture" may reflect and suit what William S. White of the *New York Times* reports to be the country's "preoccupation with comfort and commodities to a degree that many politicians believe has not been paralleled in this century." But it is equally possible that there might be less of such preoccupation if the President chose to stress the challenges of democracy instead of the accomplishments of the economic system. Truman, on the other hand, was a first-rate provoker of public controversy, but did little to educate

the public to the pros and cons of the issues he raised. The man who never became President, Norman Thomas, has done more than either of the above to prod the nation on in the job of strengthening and extending democracy.

Where is the voice of liberalism?

Why are liberals floundering in the exterior darkness? Because they have not turned their attention to the new problem of mass democracy: how to restore citizen participation and control over an increasingly complex society, a society in which the traditional two-way communication between publics and governments have become a one-way private road travelled only by propaganda. They have achieved the limited goals they set for themselves in the 'Thirties, and while they are not quite satisfied with the results, within the existing framework of ideas and institutions they know not what to do next. To consider the possibility that those institutions and values themselves should be challenged would make liberals into radicals; this they do not dare become. For as liberals they may share in the power of the existing system. As radicals they would be destined to a long and uncomfortable period of agitation from outside.

Liberalism's program for economic reform has consisted of imposing a public interest ethic onto a self-interested set of economic institutions. The persistent capture of the instruments of public interest regulation by the intended regulatees does not seem to have persuaded them that something more is required. Perhaps liberalism will again become a fighting force, but not until it recognizes that the sources of power and the instruments of power are constantly changing, and that new analysis of the power problem, and new solutions, are called for. Recent liberalism's sole solution has been to make Big Government even bigger, as a counter-weight to private power. But simply to transfer power from private to public hands will not achieve what the liberals want so long as the public is persuaded that the demands of business are just.

The analysis presented above is in many ways a discouraging and disturbing one, at least to its author. This is partly because, as someone has remarked, it seems useful to afflict the comfortable, especially when so many are trying to comfort the afflicted with delusions of well-being. But it is also because I believe there are some things happening about which we *should* be disturbed.

Yet a counsel of despair is not being voiced either. Democracy, if one takes the long view, is something new in the world. It has surmounted many obstacles in the past two centuries and there is no *a priori* reason why other obstacles may not also be overcome as they arise, so that the individual may be restored to the position of control over his own destiny that is the supreme goal of democratic politics.

The problem of capital accumulation, and the various forms it takes in different kinds of society, has become of world-wide importance, now that the "underdeveloped" countries are trying to industrialize themselves. In the following discussion John Strachey, the well-known British socialist economist, raises a number of critical questions concerning the relation of accumulation to democracy and totalitarianism. The article is taken from a chapter called "Accumulation, Democracy and Equality," from Mr. Strachey's new book, published this fall, Contemporary Capitalism. It is reprinted here by permission of Randon House, Inc.; copyright, 1956, by John Strachey.

CAPITAL ACCUMULATION AND SOCIALIST POLITICS

John Strachey

Recent democratic socialist economists, notably Mr. Hugh Dalton and Mr. Hugh Gaitskell, have laid great emphasis on limiting more and more the right to inherit considerable quantities of income-bearing property. This is undoubtedly a sound view, so long as it is realized that income from inherited property is merely the most scandalous case of the general scandal of the private appropriation of the socially produced surplus by means of private property in the means of production.

How much, however, does the continuance of this scandal matter economically? To Marxists it is, of course, all-important, for it is the essence of exploitation. But a more important question is this: how much does it matter in the minds and hearts of the Western wage earners themselves. The answer must surely be that it matters to them a good deal, but not overwhelmingly. Many wage earners do realize more or less clearly that they and the technicians and executives are the people who produce the social surplus, and resent bitterly the fact that, legally at any rate, it is appropriated by passive shareholders. So long as private shareholding in large, oligopolistic companies, which is now the economically decisive form of private property, persists, the wage earners can never feel that they are genuinely working either for themselves or for the community.

But we must not lose sight of the other side of the picture. The

fact is that the *immediate* economic gain of abolishing the private appropriation of the socially accumulated surplus would be by no means so great as would appear at first sight. This is not to deny that the amount of social waste represented by the luxury expenditure of the rich in all latest-stage capitalisms is considerable. It is at least important in Britain, more important in America, and more important still, in proportion to the national income, in Western Germany (and, for that matter, in France and Italy). But nevertheless it is not a very large factor in the standard of life which the wage-earning mass of the population of such societies can hope to achieve. For it must be agreed that the leaders of the national economy, the skilled technicians and the high executives (as contrasted with the functionless shareholders) must, at our stage of human development, receive very considerably higher incomes than the rank and file of the community. Moreover, it has now been discovered by trial and error that this must be so, in the contemporary stage of human development, in any form of society, whether capitalist or Communist.* Once this is recognized, the fact must be faced that, while the amounts, in latest-stage capitalisms, spent by idle and functionless property owners would provide a useful fund for raising the standard of life of the masses, yet they would be by no means sufficient suddenly to transform that standard. The real scandal is the existence of a category of persons deriving very large net incomes (in one way or another) from completely passive shareholding in the main productive enterprises of society, rather than the actual quantitative loss to the community which their expenditure represents.†

Nevertheless, the long-term, as opposed to the immediate, economic gain of abolishing, or even markedly diminishing, unearned property-derived income might be very great. This would be so if the resultant saving (in real terms, the productive effort thus released), instead of being distributed to the mass of the population, was used to increase investment. Let us say, purely for the sake of argument, that the rich are receiving (net) 10% of the gross national product by way of prop-

* These differentials in *earned* income are much higher in Russia than in Britain. During my period of office as Secretary of State for War, I had worked out a comparison of the differential as between the pay of a Russian private and a Russian Marshal on the one hand, and a British private and a British Field Marshal on the other. The result appeared to be that the Russian differential was at least eight times as wide as the British, post-tax in both cases.

A few British socialists, Mr. Victor Gollancz for example, in agreement with Bernard Shaw, deny the contemporary necessity for marked differentials in earned income. I wish I could agree with them.

† Thus the differentials in *earned* income in contemporary Britain may well be on the low, rather than on the high, side. But this fact is habitually confused with the continued existence of very high *unearned*, property-derived, incomes, the huge differential effect of which taxation can do no more than mitigate, as we have seen.

erty-derived income, half of which they spend and half of which they save and re-invest. If, then, the 5% of the national product used up by the rich in the spending of their unearned incomes was added to investment, it would permit, over the years, of a rapid acceleration in the rate of growth of the national product. It would not indeed *double* the rate of investment, for, as we shall see immediately, the savings of the rich are today far from being the only source of investment. But it would, over, say, a decade, make a very useful difference. This, however, presupposes a way of making sure that the extra accumulation thus effected actually would be used, *i.e.*, invested. Moreover it presumes a progressive *abolition* of the functionless, unearned, property-derived incomes of the rich, as distinct from their mere mitigation by taxation. And I for one cannot imagine any way of effecting that abolition except by the transference of their income-bearing property to society.

Semi-collectivized Accumulation

Writing in the nineteen-fifties, it is necessary to add a further qualification to the classical socialist objection to the private appropriation of the socially produced surplus. In capitalist societies of the latest stage, such as Britain and America, an important part of the social surplus never in fact reaches the hands of the individual owners of capital, although it still nominally becomes their legal property. In the first place, a really considerable part is now taxed away again, pooled in the hands of the state, and used as society thinks best. On the whole this tax-diverted part of the surplus tends to be spent upon current consumption, usually by way of either social services or defense. And conservatively minded writers accordingly see in the taxation of profits and of large incomes in general a squandering of the seed corn of the community. But their arguments can never be taken on their merits so long as their suggestion for preserving the seed corn is—to continue the agricultural analogy—to let the landlords keep it as their absolute private property to do what they like with. Moreover, there is nothing inevitable about the state using its part of the social surplus for consumption after it has diverted it by tax. It can be, and in Britain recently on occasions has been, used, directly or indirectly, for accumulation, *i.e.*, it has been used to add to the community's stock of productive resources.

Second, the great corporations, which have become the decisive units of production, are increasingly inclined to refrain from distributing a part of the remainder of their surpluses (after tax) to their individual shareholders. Increasingly they themselves use a part of their surpluses for developing their own means of production. This semi-collectivized

process of accumulation on the part of the great corporations may well become an even more important factor than the pooling of surpluses in the national budget by means of taxation. As these pages were being first drafted in May, 1954, the largest of all British privately owned companies—Imperial Chemical Industries—issued its annual report. It showed that in the years 1945 to 1952, ICI had invested in new productive equipment, stock, etc., £213 million. Of this, £153 million had been drawn from “sources within the company,” *i.e.*, from non-distributed surpluses of one kind or another. Only £60 million had been raised from the market. Nor would it be true to say that all of this latter sum of £60 million represented the capital of individual rich men which they could have spent on luxuries instead of reinvesting in ICI. A great part of it unquestionably represented semi-collectivized surpluses of another kind, *i.e.*, funds of insurance companies and similar institutions. Or again, we can take a much more general illustration from America. In 1953 the profits of all corporations appear to have been some \$43 billion before tax. Of this sum \$23 billion went in corporate taxes, \$10 billion was held back by the corporations as undistributed profits and presumably reinvested, leaving only \$10 billion to be distributed to individual shareholders. (*Economic Report of the President 1954*, Chart 23, p. 43.) This is an account of an economy in which the function of accumulation is in a state of transition.

Such developments of the latest stage begin to point beyond the confines of the system itself. For example, we are at once prompted to ask why the directors of the boards of the oligopolies accumulate in this way, if the process benefits them, individually and financially, but remotely, if at all? The answer is no doubt complex, but in the main, surely, it must be that they accumulate in order to enhance the power and success of their organizations; they accumulate in order to be the directors of a concern of the first rather than the second magnitude. They accumulate for fear that their corporation will lag behind in the race for technical improvement, and may thus ultimately be swallowed up by a rival. And if at first hearing these seem but weak motives compared to real, old-fashioned self-enrichment, the answer must be that they have not proved so. Our experience is that the oligopolies accumulate very determinedly. It evidently matters extremely to their directors that “their show” should expand and succeed even if they will continue to get much the same salaries, expense accounts and privileges after it has done so. Old-fashioned competition has been metamorphosed into a complex kind of rivalry. Moreover, since their motive is the acquisition of prestige and power, rather than wealth, their motive for expansion is an unlimited one. “Keeping up with

the Joneses" is a trivial matter compared with "keeping up with the ICI"—or with DuPonts or Fords.

The Amount, Not the Form

For all these reasons it is becoming clear that what chiefly determines the standard of life of the mass of the population is not the social *form* taken by accumulation, *e.g.*, whether it be private profit or a social fund, but its *amount*. In other words, at any given level of national productivity, what in the main determines the national standard of life is not whether accumulation takes the form of private property or a social fund, but whether the rate of accumulation is set high or low. The higher it is set, the lower will be the standard of life (other things being equal) at the given moment; but the higher (other things being equal) will be the standard of life attainable in the future. Conversely, the lower the rate of accumulation, the more of our products we shall be able to consume now, but the slower we shall enlarge our productive capacity.

The importance of the amount rather than the form of accumulation has been brought into our consciousness by the fact that the Communist societies of our day, which have abolished the private appropriation of the social surplus, are nevertheless maintaining a higher rate of accumulation than any other societies of which we have evidence. Thus, if we ignore for a moment the form which accumulation takes, the Communist societies undoubtedly deduct from their wage earners a larger proportion of their product than do the capitalist societies. Can it be said, then, that they "exploit" their workers even more than do the capitalists? That all depends on whether the question of the *form* or the *amount* of the deduction from possible present consumption is considered the main thing. To the Marxist the decisive thing is that none of the vast sums deducted from possible consumption in Russia, for example, go into the pockets of Russian owners of the means of production in the form of private profit. They are all used to build new steel works, power stations, atom plants, etc., etc., potentially at least for the ultimate benefit of the Russian people as a whole. On the other hand, a sceptically and conservatively minded Western wage earner might comment that in fact the considerable smaller proportionate deduction made in the form of private profit from *his* possible consumption was not, in the main, used for the luxury spending of the rich, but did get used for building new means of production.*

* We shall find that the worst trouble under capitalism is that not only does some of it get diverted into luxury spending by the rich, but that at intervals some of it does not get used at all. We shall be much occupied by this aspect of the matter as soon as we remove our temporary assumption that the diversion of resources from consumption does always in fact result in investment in new means of production.

that he was confident of getting his share of the final products of these new means of production, as a result of using his weapon of democratic pressure; that for his part he was more concerned at the *amount* of the deduction than the form; that he would rather have, say, 20% taken from him for private profit than 40% for a social fund.

Nevertheless, their tremendous rate of uninterrupted accumulation will undoubtedly stand the Communist societies in immensely good stead in the long run, even though it means that they have hitherto had to hold down the standard of life of the mass of their populations more rigorously, and more tyrannously, perhaps than capitalist societies have ever done. This fact is illustrated not only by the forty years' history of Russia since the Revolution. The gigantic nations of Asia are, in the middle of the twentieth century, beginning the processes of industrialization; China is engaging on that process in a predominantly socialist form; India in a semi-capitalist form. And if, on the whole, many people fancy that China will succeed in industrializing herself more rapidly than India, that is precisely because they think that the Communist dictatorship in China will squeeze a higher rate of accumulation out of the Chinese people than can be secured from the Indian people by a mixed process, which is partly capitalist and partly democratic socialist.

Paradoxical conclusions emerge from these considerations. On the one hand, bitter experience in the first half of the century has taught us that the innate tendency of latest-stage capitalism is to attempt to maintain an extreme degree of inequality, and, associated with it, so high a rate of accumulation as to lead to periodic slumps and crises.

But, as we have seen, the degree of inequality has now been somewhat mitigated, on balance, by the pressure of the wage earners acting through democratic institutions. The wage earners, who have become conscious of what is happening, are now apt to grudge every penny put aside for accumulation, because it takes the form of totally unjustified unearned income. Thus the profound paradox might arise that, as the influence of the wage earners grows, and in spite of the fact that classical capitalism's supreme tendency was to accumulation *à l'outrance*, the contemporary democratic capitalisms might be, to some extent, immobilized by the play and balance of their own social forces. Under the pressure of wage earners resentful of the out-of-date social form taken by accumulation, namely, private profit, they might accumulate too intermittently or too sluggishly to hold their own in the race with the ruthlessly accumulative Communist societies. In that case the ironic situation would have been reached that it was precisely the fact that accumulation took the sociologically indefensible form of private profit which was making adequate and successful accumulation difficult.

Before and After the Hump

Indeed it has been argued that democracies, even if they have become socialist democracies, will never be able to match the rate of accumulations of the dictatorships. For, it is suggested, their electors will always see to it that their governments devote a very high proportion of their gross national products to immediate consumption. I believe that this contention has force for societies in one stage of economic development, but that it has much less force for societies which have reached a more developed stage.

This brings us to a concept used by modern economists—particularly Dr. Thomas Balogh—the concept that there is a “hump” in the process of the industrialization and general modernization of a community, a “hump” which it is arduous and painful in the extreme to surmount. But once this hump is surmounted—and by whatever methods—the community will be able to develop, and in particular to accumulate, with far less difficulty. Till communities are “over the hump” the process of capital accumulation is both imperative—if appreciable progress is to be made—and at the same time extremely painful for the population. For the bitter truth is that in such circumstances accumulation, under no matter what kind of social system, can only take place at the direct expense of the existing standard of life of the mass of the population. The manhours of labor necessary to build the initial, basic industrial equipment of the country in question must be diverted somehow from the task of providing the existing supply of consumers’ goods and services. This must mean, unless circumstances are especially favorable, an initial fall in that standard.* It would be asking much of an electorate to ask it to vote itself such a fall in its own, by hypothesis, meager standards of life, however much the economists were to prove that this was the only way to raise those standards, at any speed, in the long run. Thus it may well prove to be true that it is very difficult to combine a socialist economy and democracy in communities which have not yet surmounted the “hump” in the process of industrialization—in, that is, what are often now called undeveloped countries. (And they comprise, let it not be forgotten, the larger parts of both the capitalist and the Communist worlds.) But then experience shows that it is also very hard to combine a capitalist economy and democracy at this “pre-hump” stage of economic development. After all, we never even tried to establish democracy in the contemporary sense in Britain until we were well over the hump, somewhere about the third quarter of the

* It may be that societies such as India with large quantities of unemployed and underemployed labor will provide an exception to this rule, if they can find a way of rapidly setting their people on to work.

nineteenth century. It is the fact of underdevelopment, not the particular economic system, whether capitalist or socialist, which makes it difficult for democracy to function in a "pre-hump" society.

Once, however, the initial hump of industrialization has been surmounted a very different situation arises. A high rate of accumulation becomes at once less imperative and far easier to achieve. The level which is achieved becomes a matter of social preference. If the level is set on the low side, all that will happen is that the present standard of life will be high, but its rate of growth over the decades relatively slow, and vice versa. Such countries as America, Britain, Australia and New Zealand, West Germany, Sweden, Holland, Canada—and more precariously France—are over the hump. In the Communist world Russia (and perhaps Eastern Germany and Czechoslovakia) alone has even approached it; but Russia may now (1956) be nearly over. It will be extremely interesting to see whether or not Russia begins to develop democratic institutions if and when she comes down the developed side.

On the whole, then, the prediction that democracies, once at any rate they have begun to transform the social form taken by accumulation into a consciously set-aside fund—once they have begun to become socialist, that is to say, for this is one way of defining the essence of the transition—will prove spendthrift, and so cause their countries to fall behind in the race of economic development, will, I believe, prove to have little force, at least in the case of highly developed communities. For all that the acceptance of a high rate of accumulation will do to their populations is to impose an initially slower increase of their standard life than would otherwise have been possible; it need never mean an arrest of that rise or an initial fall. Once accumulation predominantly takes the form of a publicly accounted for, continually discussed, social fund, instead of the large unearned incomes of irresponsible individuals, the difficulty of securing support for a high rate of accumulation will become much less. After all, we are at present asking the wage earners to abstain from consumption in order to provide high incomes* to the rich which they need not legally use for accumulation at all, but are quite free to dissipate in any form of luxury spending. (And, after all, in some cases that is what does actually happen.) After the transformation of the form and method of accumulation, it will not, I believe, prove difficult to convince modern electorates that a high rate of accumulation is in their long-run interest. Even the simplest peasant knows the necessity of putting aside the seed corn.†

* By "incomes" I mean in this context the actual amounts which the rich do in fact, by one means or another, retain after tax. And these amounts are still high.

† An additional reason why the problem may not prove as intractable as had been supposed has recently been advanced. It is now suggested that really advanced in-

Evidence that this is so is provided by the example of Sweden. Sweden is by no means a fully socialist democracy. Nevertheless she has now (1956) been ruled by Social Democratic governments, with socialistic and equalitarian tendencies, virtually without interruption, for twenty-five years. And yet in 1956 Sweden is accumulating at an exceedingly high per cent of her gross national product.* Again, the rate of accumulation instinctively established by the British Labor Government in 1945-1951 was much higher instead of lower than that which British capitalism had established in the nineteen-thirties.

There is a final reason why the basic problem of accumulation should be manageable for socialist democracies. The wage earners learned by agonizing experience in the inter-war years that maintaining a relatively low rate of consumption, in order to make possible a high rate of accumulation, may not, under capitalism, result in a rapid growth of society's powers of production at all. It may produce, instead, chronic mass unemployment. For the resources "saved" from consumption may not get used after all for the creation of new means of production; they may simply be left idle. It is this monstrous contingency, even more than private profit, that "puts off" the present-day electorate from accepting a high rate of accumulation. As soon as this has ceased to be a possibility, the electorate will be much more favorable to a high rate of accumulation. On the other hand, it is this very characteristic of latest-stage capitalism which more than anything else complicates the problem of its transformation by democratic means into a predominant-socialist society.

* The Swedes actually claim a rate of 33-1/3% per annum. If these figures were really comparable in their method of calculation they would be much higher than either the current British or American rate. But I am informed that there may be certain offsets.

dustrial societies need a lower rate of accumulation than has hitherto been supposed. Mr. Colin Clark is now (1956) an advocate of this view. It is suggested that technical progress is now being carried forward by means of discoveries and developments which save capital, per unit of product, quite as much as they save labor, so that we need worry our heads much less than had been supposed about this whole matter of setting aside resources for accumulation. This is a convenient view. But surely it should not be pressed too far? Mr. Clark points out that in future non-material forms of development, such as qualitatively superb educational facilities, may be more important than new material equipment. No doubt. But then it costs far more to build, equip and staff a first-rate new university than to build a first-rate new power station. Whatever the objects of expenditure, it will, surely, be necessary to divert resources which could have been used for immediate consumption, if rapid development is to be achieved.

MARXISM: CRITICISM AND/OR ACTION

Harold Rosenberg

We have to go back to the witch doctors or the Shakespeare of *Hamlet* or *Macbeth* to reach a world in which spectres, abstract beings, names come to life, "objective powers" play so large a part as they do in that of Marx—from that "mysterious thing," the commodity, which floats in the shadow of the physical products of modern industry, to those "personifications of economic relations," the social classes, which, according to *Capital*, are the protagonists of the political-economic drama. Each of these entities, in one of Marx's most characteristic phrases, "takes on an independent existence over against the individuals" and dominates human behavior. It is they who supply both the actors and the props for the stage of history; living men and women, magically bound to their service as Caliban by the wand of Prospero, act but to effect *their* ends. Even the hero, Marx takes pains to demonstrate, while imagining that he follows his own will, actually sustains in his thought and feeling the mode of life, the limits and half-conscious purposes of a collective person, the class which has chosen him; and he is lifted or cast down according to its condition.

With Marx, of course, these incorporeal figures and powers have not migrated into the human sphere from nature or the supernatural; they are offspring of men's own activities, and precisely of the most practical. They are concretions of behavior as it has been given its shape within the social whole; phantom as they are, they are inseparable from human reality. For instance, a social class for Marx is an "illusory community," but it arises from and embodies the most basic relations, the "materialist connection of men with one another." A class is composed entirely of alter egos, since individuals "belong to it only as average individuals" and not as unique persons; yet this community of doubles is the individual's exclusive ground of self-realization. For Marx the ruling principle of civilized life is metamorphosis, in which nothing is real except in its transfictional state.

We hesitate to call "myth" this system of constructs which are not merely mental but the specific forms of the human world. "The difference," says Marx, "between the individual as person and what is accidental to him is not a conceptual difference but an historical fact. This distinction has a different significance at different times." Nevertheless, we cannot avoid speaking of these changing creations in meta-

phors of the imaginary. In history, as in the dream, past actions become incarnated and continue to incarnate themselves in effigies of living events. The present is displaced by these residues; and this deprivation of immediate, waking time is the common anguish. Our acts as soldiers, as mechanics, as radical critics, encase us as if they moulded themselves in clay or metal upon our bodies. The tyranny of the done causes our very skills to betray us, like that knife thrower of De Maupassant's so expert he could not miss his target by a hair's breadth even when he wanted to. Man makes himself against himself. "*Le mort saisit le vif*," Marx quotes in the Preface to *Capital*. But it is not only the survival of anachronisms that he wishes to combat.

Marx is not slow to celebrate the tremendous physical onslaught of capitalism against all traditional forms and institutions, as well as the scientific criticism it has applied to ancient superstitions. "Constant revolutionizing of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions, everlasting uncertainty and agitation, distinguish the bourgeois epoch from all earlier ones. All fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions, are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify." The single individual has emerged and has declared his independence, claiming his association with others to be the result of a free contract.

Capitalism, however, has not broken the siege of the past upon the present. It has banished religious fetiches only to succumb to a *process of fetich-making* of its own. Bourgeois society was itself born out of myth, explains *The Eighteenth Brumaire*; the revolutions that brought it into being summoned up personages, costumes and rhetoric out of long-vanished states. Most important, it has established as its essential activity the conversion of living human energy into spectral force—for to Marx that is just what *capital* is, a quasi-thing incorporating the past actions of men and women and able to control what they do now. "In bourgeois society, living labor is but a means to increase accumulated labor... in bourgeois society therefore the past dominates the present." Folded in the center of capitalist dynamics Marx detected a stasis in which completed being embodied itself continually.

It is toward this motionless center from which emanate like steam from a crack the Delphic wraiths of capitalism that *Capital* directs its tremendously detailed, systematic analysis. Assuming in the form of capital a fierce mechanical vitality, the dead labor of men extends in every direction a web of abstract entities that change the world as if in obedience to a will of their own. Marx's major work sets itself the task to translate these magical excrescences back into their human matter. Behind the system of "independent existents"—the commodity, money, the market—it exposes the processes by which expended labor is converted into the economic plasma which is the source of capitalist vigor and the drama of class coercion, spiritual poverty and revolt that accompanies that conversion. The bias for this exposure is Marx's

unlimited hostility to mystification and his stubborn belief in the immediate possibility of a society in which, as in the communism described in *The German Ideology*, it will be "impossible that anything shall exist independently of individuals, in so far as things are only a product of the preceding intercourse of the individuals themselves."

SINCE THE EFFIGIES of the unalive rule both inside the mind and in the physical organization of society, they can be expelled only if their independent existence, and with it their superhuman power, is destroyed in both. All criticism, Marx had written early, is criticism of religion, and criticism and revolution complement each other. By demonstrating how capital, the commodity, property, are actually frozen human acts and relations, criticism dissolves these deities in the consciousness and makes them contingent on the history of classes. In turn, by demonstrating how social classes are actually compounded out of changing modes of producing subsistence, criticism destroys the illusion of the independence of these collective egos and makes them contingent on economic behavior and the material world. The evolution of class struggles, Marx wrote to Wedemeyer in 1852, had been described by others before him, as well as the economic physiology of classes: his own contribution, he said, rested on three propositions, the first of which was: "that the existence of classes was tied up with certain phases of material production." If inside the economic system operated the human drama of class compulsion and resistance, inside the bodies of the classes circulated the routines by which real men kept themselves alive. This double unmasking, peeling abstraction from abstraction in order to reach the facts from which all abstractions have grown, is the innovation of materialist criticism. In everything "the root is man."

For Marx's dialectics, history itself is an unmasking; the uncovering of reality takes place not in the mind alone but through an actual corporeal stripping of the social and historical "integument"—another characteristic expression—which makes the human fact what it is. History is like the tragedy of the Greeks: behind the present fact on the stage there exists the hidden fact, which is coming out and will be recognized through its inevitable enactment. Without the tragic enactment, criticism is only an opinion. By itself, without change in the situation, it can never win lasting conviction, for the "unreal" fact stands forth to deny it. Since the source of social myth is the real relations of society, the mere critic of existing forms is doomed to be the hero of a fable of frustration. Every image the exasperated modern Tiresias laboriously scrapes from the brain of his auditors is restored without delay by the factories and streets. If criticism is not to be an end in itself, it must be a means to put an end to those material conditions from which the mirage is bred—"those conditions whose life-principle has already been refuted" but which survive nevertheless as a fetter upon life. "In themselves," Marx complains with a note of the bore-

dom of the philosopher with the lag of existence, "they are not sufficiently worthy of attention but are a state of fact both despicable and despised." The aim of materialist analysis is not to continue an endless practice of unveiling particular examples of animated death but to help eliminate all of them by laying bare their common social cause to a stroke of force.

CRITICISM, then, for Marx is an action. More exactly, it is the beginning of an action; one that demands completion by social transformation. It is in regard to the latter phase of attack upon the myth-content of civilized life, the part that has to be carried out by others than the critic, that the great practical problems of Marx's thought arise, including those of its strategy and its ethics—and with these the related questions of the revolutionary roles of the individual, the political party and the social class.

For Marx the assault of criticism upon the "objective powers" is to be made effective by the revolution of a class, the proletariat. If, as has been maintained, Christian philosophy differs from the pagan in that it centers upon a unique event of the past, the Crucifixion, Marx's historical materialism distinguishes itself equally from all other philosophies in centering on the future victory of the working class. In his letter to Wedemeyer cited above, Marx enumerates two further innovations of his thought, in addition to his explanation of classes: the idea of the *necessary* conquest of power by the proletariat, and that of the function of that power in ending the class struggle by bringing to life a society of free individuals. At the heart of Marxism is its contention that its criticism and the revolutionary action of the working class have the identical objective, revolution by the second being the material equivalent of the first and supplying its positive social content. This daring concept, whatever be its scientific validity, is a pre-condition for thinking as a Marxist.

WAS THE CORRESPONDENCE between materialist analysis and working class ingression into power to be the result of the adoption by a decisive quantity of individual workingmen of Marx's theories? The answer is, definitely, No. Apart from his contempt for ideologists and Utopians, including "Marxists," who see in ideas the cause of historical happenings, Marx's entire perspective excludes the notion that an historical effect can originate with an individual or an association of individuals. The conqueror of classes and of class struggle must itself be one of history's collective pseudo-organisms, a class. The action of the proletariat paralleling materialist criticism was to be self-motivated as a necessary result both of the nature of the proletariat and of the objective stimuli of its revolt.

To qualify the working class for its meta-critical role, Marx evoked the negative process of capitalism which, in denuding the proletariat

of illusory being must cause their revolutionary action to come forth as an accurate expression of their situation and to guide them with ever-deepening clarity. Primarily, the unique competence of this class to attain to the real arises from the utter futility of the daily acts of the factory laborers in conferring individuality upon themselves. They exist as an incorporation of generality. If all men belong to their respective classes only as "average individuals," with the proletarian, "average" is the whole of what he is. His time is a wage-rate, his product not a self but an interchangeable commodity.

Thus in the modern worker the difference between the individual person and his class has been suppressed, and with it the illusory nature of both. Members of all other historical classes, split by the division of labor, have achieved their real existence in the masquerade of types compounded by society out of their activities of yesterday. In the proletariat capitalism has created the very personification of self-loss through social behavior, those "newfangled men," as Marx called them, who, like the machine, are "an invention of modern times" and are multiplied automatically with the accumulation of capital. With the worker the social process of appropriating the individual's past and using it to dominate his present has been carried to its extreme. Since his work assumes the form of capital which is taken away from him, he is constantly drained of his "life content"; his acts produce no accretion of individuality, not even an illusory one. On the contrary, the products which are the substance of his being are in their transmuted form applied only to extract more labor from him.* Wrung dry on this wheel of both his past time and his living time, of both memory, and imagination, the worker exists as an "abstract individual."

But by the very fact that the workingmen are through their activities constantly rendered into human nothings, Marx sees them as "put into a position to enter into relations with another as *individuals*" (his emphasis) and to act together in the daylight of genuine self-interest. No past, personal or class, no socially constructed self, stands between the factory worker and his fellows, nor between his sense of community and the reality on which it is based. If he begins to act for himself, his act will be a genuine self-expression, at the same time that it will be an act for all. "Only the proletariat of the present day, who are completely shut off from all self-activity, are in position to achieve a complete and no longer restricted self-activity."

But the workers cannot act for themselves without breaking the social mechanism which transform their acts and siphons them off as capital, that is, without a revolution against the ultimate source of modern hallucination. Hence the choice stated by Marx—"The working class is either revolutionary or it is nothing"—is at the same time

* *Capital* in describing this process resorts to melodramatic language: "Capital is dead labor, that vampire-like only lives by sucking living labor, and lives the more the more labor it sucks."

the formula both for his own critique of capitalism as a specific epoch in the history of human alienation, and for the impulse of the workers to revolution as a revulsion against the void within them. Whenever a crisis of capitalism reproduces the vacuity of the proletariat as physical hunger and the direct threat of death, the *final* revolution is on the order of the day.

By his revolutionary action the worker starts a psychic increment that makes him an individual; he arrives, as Rosa Luxemburg emphasized, at ethical existence. The appearance of this class upon the stage of history brings new persons into the world (not molecules of a mass), whose characters are derived from the single social activity that cannot harden into a thing, from revolution. The restoration of alienated labor would destroy these persons, in destroying their freedom; hence the condition of their survival is the "revolution in permanence." The new existence itself of the working men depends on their day-by-day triumph over surplus value as a social force against each; and this victorious existence, constantly augmenting individuality, is itself socialism and the "transition to the abolition of all classes."

For Marx, therefore, the socialist revolution is immanent in the nature of the proletarian class and the need of its components to achieve individuality. On the other hand, individuals, *apart from their intellectual struggle against mystification*, have no deciding role in the historical drama; their free action as such can begin only *at the end of* history and with the vanishing of class.

MATERIALIST CRITICISM is the revolutionary action of the individual; revolutionary activity is the materialist criticism of the working class. Marx's conviction of the inter-relation and the inevitable synchronization of these two processes constitutes the key to his politics and assigns to individuals and the class their different roles in it. The Communists, whether consisting exclusively of Marx and Engels, or of an association that multiplies the Marxian voice, were not, according to *The Communist Manifesto*, to form a separate group competing with other working-class parties for control of proletarian action. Their revolutionary function was to carry on the double unmasking of materialist criticism: "in all political movements they bring to the front as the leading question in each the property question, no matter what its degree of development at the time," showing changes in the relations of production to be at once the means and the end of the transformation of society. Conversely, in all social and economic questions they expose the content of class coercion and struggle. Taking for granted the growing organization, cohesion and will to combat of the proletariat, spontaneously brought about by the processes of capitalist production, Marxian criticism would act upon the proletarian revolution in two ways: 1) as the "head of passion" it would help change instinctive action into conscious action by bringing before the working men the formulation of their position and of their experience as a class; 2) as

the irreconcilable challenge of the mind to mystification, it would provide a model of suspicion and hostility toward bourgeois society, a sentry for the class of workingmen against delusions through which they might be made a tool to defeat their own interests. (See Marx's letter to Bolte.)

So LONG as it assumes that it is operating in the presence of rising proletarian revolt, Marxian criticism is an action that remains criticism. Where, however, its intellectual attack against society no longer takes for granted the parallel movement of the victim class, a terrifying confusion besets Marxism, particularly with regard to historical roles of individuals and classes. Its political concepts and social values become ambiguous, or even appear in reverse. Personalities, parties, ideas, become all at once prodigies of history-making and responsible day by day for the destiny of man.

In theory unwavering as to the revolutionary capacity of the proletariat, Marx was not tempted to put criticism into a position inferior to action. For him the plot of history was given, including its denouement. The process by which labor is converted into capital also holds the secret of capitalism's future wreck: using its transportable energy, capital, it continually augments both the class of wage-workers and the productive power of labor by creating a constantly widening interplay of men and tools, at the same time that, through the accumulation and centralization of wealth, it narrows the slit through which this growing force must pass in order to be changed into capital. An ever-mounting pressure, ever more closely confined—and which is reflected in the tensions of the classes, their preparations, their strategies. In the explosion which is inevitable, unless truly popular forces create the means for bringing about socialization by stages, the cave of illusions vanishes and labor is left in the open air of the free cooperation of individuals.

This prediction, that capitalism must automatically develop the elements of the society that will supersede it, presents, of course, the famous "contradiction" in Marx between the inevitability of socialism and the call to revolution. It is pragmatism, however, not Marx that sees the historical protagonists as free individuals needing the stimulation of an undetermined end in order to strive for a social form which they have chosen. In Marx's own terms, which allow for no point of individual contemplation and decision outside the drama of history, the so-called contradiction is meaningless. If the "higher powers" that combat each other existed entirely separate from us, we could passively await their self-destruction. If, on the other hand, they were mere images, analysis could dissolve them like the superstitions left over from dead societies. Since, however, classes and their phantom by-products both control our behavior as external powers and live in us as ourselves, our lives *are* the actions we take with regard to them. We need no

desired outcome to induce us to fight the class struggle—the struggle fights us. And if the Marxist critic wills the victory of the proletariat, it is not for the sake of the future of others but from the necessity of his own present thought. His intellectual effort is a resistance to the shapes of nightmare, a resistance which the conviction that waking is near does not weaken. History is the action of mass—"I" 's and the command being always present, passivity is equally characteristic of the action of individuals as of their abstention from action. Even hesitation is an action, as in *Hamlet*, for Marx the typical action of the lower bourgeoisie, as the class pressed between classes, and productive of its destiny. In a profound sense Marx's view dissolves the aura of grandeur and irrationality around historical performance responsible for revolutionary conceit.

CONCENTRATING on the mass actors of the historical drama, Marx was not interested in the political choices of individuals but only in the accuracy with which their views and their acts mirrored the hidden movements of the social process—for instance, his well-known admiration of the royalist Balzac in contrast to his scorn for socialist litterateurs. The moral issue of individual adherence (and betrayal) which has taken on so much importance in conspiratorial Marxism is irrelevant to Marx's conception of historical change; one looks in vain in his writings for reflections on the logos of individual, party and class identification. When he himself takes part in organizational activities, it is exclusively as the promoter of his own conclusions. Nor in the absence of such activities does his work pause: the proletarian mass hero must wait for favorable conditions, including his own inner development; the critic need not wait: his exposures are the intellectual equivalent of the situation as it happens to be and as the crisis will define it. Nowhere is there any hint in Marx of a wish to change himself nor to add ethical density to his existence through revolutionary commitment. Since a man's intellectual products, like any others, stand against him as an alien force, Marx does not seek in his ideas a clarification of himself and, as noted above, "Marxist" is to him a derogatory term. Communism could not be for him a school of self-effacement nor of self-definition, and the meditation, to be or not to be a Communist, is never addressed by him either to himself or to others.

With the loss of its metaphysical assurance, with the admission of doubt regarding the capacity of the proletariat and its destiny—a doubt upon which were founded both the absent-minded revisionist socialism of Bernstein and the elite-activism of Lenin—Marxism has seen its functions as criticism and as action split apart and enter into conflict with each other. For Marx, as we have seen, the disclosure of the material realities cloaked in political concepts, mass movements, etc., is futile if no social force is being born to change them. But no sooner does Marxism itself turn into an ideology uniting the actions of individuals, than

it abandons its critical position and with it its dialectical relation to social transformation. The Party as the association of Marxian professionals stands as an independent power over and against both the class of laborers and its own individual members. The discontinuity of the proletariat, its rise from and relapse into nothingness, which is the pathetic basis of its experience of itself, as well as the impetus of its future freedom, is attacked by the whip of the Party leaders, for whom revolutionary politics exist as a thing. In place of resistance to deprivation converting itself into political action through an expansion in self-consciousness, inter-communication and comprehensiveness of program, acceptance of the Party leaders' decisions by individual workers becomes the basis of working class unity. With the lifeless discipline of the machine and the appropriation of his action extended into the political realm, the worker remains set fast in his abstractness, a personification of nullity with Marxist slogans as his ideal content. At the same time, working class revolt, since it is no longer a reflex of the worker's situation, ceases to serve as a revelation of the internal processes of society, so that revolutionary criticism is deprived of the data by which to correct itself. The Party as idea and as past becomes fixed in the revolutionist as his illusory character. From being a repulse of the unreal, revolution becomes a surrender to a fetichism of the act—an equivalent to those other forms of vertigo in which products of the human brain and previous human relations appear as endowed with vitality and engaged in transactions with the human race. The Party (and its foes) now takes on the appearance of being infinitely active, while the individual communist and the working class are found repeatedly collapsing into apathy. Needless to add, the critical activities of individuals, the only historical initiative possible to them as such, are put to sleep. For all their claims to manipulating the gears of history, and despite their tactics of ubiquitous "activation," modern revolutionary parties actually promote an enormous passivity.

MARXISM is unthinkable apart from its premise of proletarian victory and its all-liberating effects. It is a philosophy suspended upon an event, a monologue in the drama of history which only the action of its mass hero can save from being a soliloquy. Its human content, the future that it desires, is to be found not in its own formulas but in the liveliness of the huge shadow by its side: "The great social measure of the Commune," said Marx in *The Civil War in France*, "was its own working existence."

No one is a Marxist who does not anticipate the proletarian transformation of society and strive to bring it about as the means for putting the demons to flight. Contrariwise, no one is a Marxist who, in the presumed interest of working class liberation, consents to serve the powers of a new otherworld. If Marx's proletarian solution to alienation turns out to be a mirage, if this promise in his thought must be

cancelled, Marxism is dead, however possible it may still be to discover in his conception clues for novel strategies of power resting upon an apathetic proletariat (e.g., neo-Bolshevism). But Marxism or no, what remains valid in Marx's analysis is the negative force of its example in persistent social unmasking, precisely the force of which hallucinatory Communism deprives it. Moreover, the systematic indication in Marx's writings, though from the point of view of Marx himself they cannot surmount the impotence of mere criticism, have by no means lost their pertinence so long as the processes that produce a proletariat continue to operate; under these circumstances, they may even be indispensable for an understanding of the situation presented by proletarian *non-action*. The consequence of the failure of the proletariat in the face of the advancing socialization of production could, for Marx, be nothing else than "barbarism" the proliferation of a modern Darkest Africa of unreal beings, sacred apparitions, secular cults, illusory unions. Will anyone deny that the bad dream and farce have become commonplaces of the public life, to say nothing of the private? Or is it necessary to prove that these phenomena have something to do with that process of depersonalization through one's calling described as "proletarianization"? With the expanding social appropriation of work in all fields, with private accumulation increasingly more rare particularly in the more dynamic industrial nations, with the growing dependence of the individual and with it his inner isolation, the condition of the factory worker has, regardless of occupational statistics, become more and more the rule throughout society. Abstract man multiplies; a progressive flattening of personality takes place, irrespective of salary categories, standards of living, bureaucratic rank. Demoralized by their strangeness to themselves and by their lack of control over their relations with others, members of every class yield themselves to artificially constructed mass egos that promise to restore their link with the past and the future. Instead of the self-creating revolt of nothings at the base of society, history appears to hold out a horror-Utopia of universal de-individualization headed by leaders who are their masks. Within this half-formed world of real spectres, Marx's criticism of modern industrial society as centered on the proletarian void offers at least a conceptual foothold. The weapon of criticism is undoubtedly inadequate. Who on that account would choose to surrender it?

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THE ECONOMICS OF WAR AND PEACE

Paul Mattick

Any contraction of the Cold War and ensuing attempts to "normalize" international relations raise fresh hopes for a peaceful solution of the prevailing imperialist antagonisms. For the Western world this involves new evaluations of the Bolshevik regimes and their aggressive aspirations. A new readiness to parley with the totalitarian world is then explained by a change of attitude on the part of the totalitarians. The new post-Stalinist policies would not alone, however, suffice for a real rapprochement between the East and the West. The Bolshevik quest for peaceful co-existence, interpreted as weakness, could actually strengthen Western anti-Bolshevik foreign policies. To maintain peace, it must be generally desired; and so it seems to be. Even the armaments race supposedly has no other object than safeguarding the peace of the world. The mounting stock-piles of atomic and thermonuclear weapons, the whole fantastic paraphernalia of modern war, are not to be employed in war. They are there to deter the enemy from making it.

In a way, of course, the Cold War itself is an instrument of peace. Although involving frequent policy changes for both sides, it secures the balance of power and prevents major changes in world conditions, since every gain for one side tends to be countermanded by the other. Thus are sustained the relatively static conditions of "co-existence." "Liquidation" of the Cold War, while it would signal relaxed political-military competition, would also mean an intensification of economic struggles for world supremacy.

At first glance we may appear to be entering a period of world-wide peaceful capital formation. Though possibly postponing war, this would not necessarily lower the probability of its occurrence, since capital expansion, by favoring some nations more than others, leads always to new imperialist frictions. It was not the Great Depression, for instance, which led to the second world war but the cumulative effect of the competitive capital production that preceded it. This cannot be admitted—it was not even seen—by all who profited during the journey to depression; they simply marched on in the belief that their prosperity was the surest guarantee for progress and peace. Yet by so doing they created a situation that escaped their control and war became "inevitable." The war itself, however, was made by social movements

and ideas that had grown out of the depression. And though the people associated with these movements and ideas took the responsibility for war upon themselves, it was not a situation of their own making that enabled and required them to do so.

In this sense, wars, like crises, are inherent in uncontrolled capital accumulation even though their actual occurrence in time is not predictable. Just as a threatening crisis may be postponed through a sudden spurt of economic and speculative activity set in motion by discoveries and innovations, so war may be postponed by a variety of circumstances that assure some sort of social stability despite the most intensive national competition in an international capital structure which is detrimental to the *general* expansion of capital. An economic crisis may be "consciously" postponed or mitigated by way of credit inflation and government intervention. This means simply that an existing crisis is prevented from running its course by "non-capitalist" methods of control—"non-capitalist" in the sense that *their persistent application would slowly alter the existing structure of the capitalist "mixed economy" in the direction of complete government control.*

II

Private capital formation, involved in the production of marketable goods, finds its limitation in diminishing market-demand. In order not to reduce the marketability of privately-produced commodities still further, government-induced production is channeled into non-market fields—the production of non-competitive public works, armaments, superfluities and waste. Production is thus increased by both capital competition and government intervention; the latter counteracts the trend toward stagnation that is implied in the former. This is celebrated as the capacity to produce both "guns and butter." Such government-induced "prosperity" may last for a considerable time; as long, in fact, as the shifting emphasis from private to government-induced production and *vice versa* forms the common policy of government and business. It may even do better than traditional, strictly-market-determined capital expansion. In any case, recent history has demonstrated the possibility of a prosperous development of the "mixed economy" under conditions of a shrinking world-market and increased government control.

A second look, however, reveals the "artificiality" of this prosperity and its inherent tendency to change the very system to which it is credited. It is for this reason that, whenever possible, governments representing private capital try to pare down expenditures, to end deficit-financing and to restore government-run industries to private exploitation. This happened in post-war America and in other capitalist nations. But nowhere did it succeed in re-establishing previously existing relations between the private and public sectors of the economies. The ratio of government expenditures to the American gross national prod-

uct, for instance, "which was 20 per cent in 1939 and rose to 52 per cent in 1944, was still about 35 per cent in 1946."¹ Unless conditions should change radically in favor of a renewed market-determined expansion of capital, government-induced and therefore government-controlled production is bound to grow in peace as it grew in war. And so long as the principle of competitive capital production prevails, steadily growing production will in increasing measure be a "production for the sake of production," benefiting neither private capital nor the population at large.

This process is somewhat obscured, it is true, by the apparent profitability of capital and the lack of large-scale unemployment. Like the state of prosperity, profitability, too, is now largely government-manipulated. Government spending and taxation are managed so as to strengthen big business at the expense of the economy as a whole. "Subsidy has become so all-pervasive that it can properly be said we live in an age of 'government by subsidy,' meaning that subsidy is a principal, or predominant, instrument for the effectuation of public purposes."² Subsidies to other groups, to farmers, for instance, are merely a consequence of the subsidization of big business, which is unavoidable if economic decline is to be forestalled. Small producers do not share in government-induced "prosperity" and their spokesmen wonder why it is that "in a period characterized by three-shift industrial activity, tremendous sales volume and record-making profits, there is such a high rate of small business bankruptcies."³ This is so because "the hundred biggest corporations accounted for 62.2 per cent of all prime defense contracts in the last five years,"⁴ because big business generally financed its expansion largely from federal funds, raised its profitability by way of interest-free loans, tax evasions, accelerated amortization schemes, etc.—and because it cannot be otherwise since modern armament production presupposes the technologies of big business, which, as the factor that determines the trend of the economy, must be kept going at any price. Even though it is true that the government has "an enormous power, the very existence of which is fatal to private enterprise," that it "can choose the companies that are to survive," and that "the designation of these 'chosen instruments' often takes place as haphazardly as blindfolded children at a birthday party pin the tail on a paper donkey,"⁵ still, as with competition, the distribution of social surplus-value by way of government policies must serve the further expansion of capital and therewith its further concentration.

However much production may be government-induced, the "mixed economy," to be such, presupposes that a substantial part of the social capital remains in private hands. Since government funds can come only from taxation and, perhaps, from government-owned enterprises, additional funds must come from non-governmental sources. In order to increase the scale of production and to accumulate capital, government creates "demand" by ordering the production of non-mar-

ketable goods, financed by government borrowings. This means that the government avails itself of productive resources belonging to private capital which would otherwise be idle. The borrowed funds are merely monetary expressions of the government's power to set unemployed resources to work. The rising national debt indicates that this power has been granted only temporarily and for a price, i.e., the interest paid to the holders of government bonds. But as government-spending on non-profitable undertakings cannot yield interest, the national debt has to be serviced out of future profits by the creditors themselves.

The transfer of control over productive resources from private capital into the hands of government by way of deficit-financing which creates "demand" of a specific type, namely public works and armaments is, in part, an increase of the demand required for private capital expansion, that is, for the production of additional capital. In this sense, deficit-financing is the continuation of the accumulation process. But though government-induced expansion of production brings forth a larger productive apparatus, still nominally in the hands of private capital, it can be fully utilized only at the command of government. To the extent to which this is true, private capital accumulation has reached the end. While production is still for private gain, economic expansion is a function of government. The growing national debt, or the continuous increase of government-induced production, implies an increasing nationalization of capital. Short of a reversal of this process, of a return to private capital accumulation, there is no possibility of getting "the government out of business," which is no longer business in the traditional sense, anyway.

III

To produce beyond the market-demand under conditions of private capital accumulation made "sense" because of the concentration trend implied in capital competition. Stronger capital destroys weaker and prevents the rise of new competitors nationally and—with greater difficulty—internationally. "Over-production," through the media of crisis and depression, destroys capital and enlarges the demand for the surviving bigger capitals, thus securing their profitability and further expansion. There would be less need for government manipulation of the economy if prolonged world-wide depressions were still a possibility, able to lead, by destroying capital, to a new international capital structure capable of further profitable accumulations. With this possibility eliminated because of nationally-directed economies, the improvement of conditions for private capital formation by holding back or cutting back existing amounts of government intervention are only a temporary possibility.

Accumulation in the private or still largely private capitalist economy continues to require, however, periodic capital destruction for the further expansion of more concentrated capital entities within an al-

tered international capital structure. Because the economic crisis has lost its effectiveness in this respect, the function of the so-called business-cycle, which has been taken over by government, appears as an armament-disarmament cycle, that is, as the increase or decrease of government spending in order to maintain and increase a given level of production. Its ideological expressions are periods of war- and peace-mongering, neither of which indicates a real drive towards war nor a real attempt to ward it off. It merely reflects the impasse in which capitalism finds itself, with no solution in war and none in peace. There is no "grand strategy" with regard to war or peace. There is only a drifting towards one or the other, determined not by conscious considerations of long-term interests nor by an insane commitment to some "historical mission," but by the economic impasse itself and the social inertia that is created by the ability to increase both productivity and waste-production.

Prior to the first world war, the relative stagnation of European capital was already mitigated by a government-fostered armaments race and America's slowing rate of capital expansion was reversed by the war itself. Her recovery of 1915 "was generated by the demand for war supplies emanating from European governments." Expansion of production "was derived in part from taxation and in part from the sale of securities to individuals and banking interests," so that the process of American recovery "was generated by an outpouring of purchasing power by way of government treasuries. It did not begin with either an expansion of ordinary consumption demand or an increase in the production of capital goods."⁶ Set in motion by the policies of governments engaged in or profiting from war, total world production rose to unprecedented heights. For the European nations it was a period not of real prosperity but a slow return to, and an insufficient enlargement of, their pre-war level of production at the price of increasing indebtedness to America. America prospered, however, and in 1929 her wealth was two-and-a-half times as great as in 1914. Measured by world production, economic activity had increased and capital had accumulated. Its seat of strength had shifted from Europe to America and as with all previous periods of depression, the war had touched off a new expansion of capital and had concentrated it in the strongest capitalist nations.

Though American production grew and her "national wealth increased, that portion utilized directly for the reproduction process of wealth continued to decline."⁷ In other words, there was a slackening of the rate of accumulation; the percentage of productive capital in relation to non-productive wealth became less instead of more. This was no longer the type of capital expansion that characterized the nineteenth century; it was a condition which Keynes later called "liquidity preference." The ratio of net investment to national income in the United States rose up to the turn of the century and declined from

then on to nearly nothing in the 1929-1938 period.⁸ The state of "liquidity preference" indicated that capital expansion initiated by war and carried over into peace was not enough to lead to a general expansion of capital production under the conditions of a market-determined economy. After a decade of limited prosperity, restricted largely to the United States, a new collapse of the market system led to new state interventions. These, however, succeeded only in stabilizing depression conditions; the full utilization and further expansion of production had to await another war.

Vast devastations in the second world war weakened both Europe and Asia and assured America's supremacy within the world economy. War was now viewed "as a great new industry whose colossal demands stimulate economic activity in every nook and cranny of the economic system," even though "the expected yields which raise the marginal efficiency of government investments are mainly in terms of social and military advantages rather than pecuniary profits."⁹ "The destruction of the European economy," Thurman Arnold pointed out, "has solved the problem of 'effective demand' for the American economy, . . . and we are in a dawn of the greatest industrial era this country ever had." Destruction, he explained, "is sometimes necessary. When Hitler achieved power, the destruction seemed necessary. Now it is necessary to meet the threat of Russia . . . and perhaps a certain amount of destruction or dislocation may accompany the threat, but it is necessary to do it. And what has happened because of that necessity: we have gotten on our toes and we are going places."¹⁰

America has, in fact, maintained a state of virtually full employment by way of war, inflation and armament production. There was sufficient recovery in extra-American economies also, so that world production has risen over what it was before the second world war. But at the half-way station of reconstruction it became evident that the old pre-war contradictions had also been rebuilt. In the beginning of 1950, unemployment became once more a dominant issue and unsalable surpluses piled up in all capitalist nations. The Korean war ended the "recession" quickly. Not the marketability of goods in general but defense production was once more a prime concern.

The "business-cycle," appearing as the expansion and contraction of government-induced production, is characterized more by political struggle than economic competition. But attempts at disarmament in the Western world, however seriously contemplated, are limited by private capital formation. Any new business decline brings with it a new shift to government spending. Partial disarmament may then be regarded as a sign of stabilization, to be discarded as soon as the economy requires additional government-induced investments. This, however, narrows the expansive power of private capital still further. Although the profitability of private enterprise may not diminish or may even increase through the enhancement of capital concentration, with regard

to the whole of the economy less capital accumulates to private account. This is a new situation. In the past, nonprofitable capital was absorbed in larger capital units. Now productive resources are losing their capital function altogether.

IV

American capital expansion was bound to a production for European markets, particularly during periods of war, and to the export of capital mainly to Western nations. Due to structural changes in the world economy—the break-up of the world-market through the extraordinary and all-around production of the American economy, the industrialization of hitherto economically-underdeveloped countries, the autarchic tendencies of state-capitalist* nations and the collapse of an international division of labor determined by nothing but the accumulation needs of Western capitalism—Europe ceased to be a market which made possible the further expansion and extension of American capital. Western Europe's own export needs, as well as her inability competitively to meet American production, based, as it is, on a higher productivity, prevents a market integration of the economies of the "free world." An all-out American effort to capture the markets of the "free world" is equally precluded by protectionist policies and the political necessity to maintain some sort of unity in the Western world.

Capital expansion implies, however, its concentration nationally as well as internationally. Its center, having shifted from Europe to America, threatens to shift again from America to the newly-developing, so-called "socialist," but actually state-capitalist, nations of the Eastern power bloc. Western superiority in production, though still a fact, is slowly declining. According to a study of the *United Nations Economic Commission*,¹¹ Russia accumulates industrial capital at a far higher rate than Western Europe, . . . and is approaching the rate of the United States. To a somewhat lesser extent this is also true for the satellite countries. Even if trade relations between the East and West improve and develop, they will do so as by-products of the expansion of the new empires around which an increasing part of the world's economic activity begins to revolve.

The totalitarian threat to the economic supremacy of the "free world" is not immediate, however, despite the high accumulation rate. Total production and general productivity in the East are still behind those of Western capitalism. This relative backwardness does not, of course, prevent countries of the Eastern power block from offering markets for other nations' surplus products, for trade is not based on absolute surpluses. The fact that Eastern countries themselves stand in need of further industrialization does not hinder the export of industrial products if this appears advantageous for political or economic reasons, or

* By "state-capitalist" I refer to the social and economic systems of those countries that are described politically as Communist.

both. There is nothing surprising about the fact "that the Russians have arranged to sell a million tons of steel to India or have undertaken to erect a new steel plant there or that they and the satellite countries are conducting an export drive in Middle East markets, with the accent on metals and engineering products. These are precisely the industries in which Soviet progress has been most rapid in recent years and in which investment has been particularly heavy."¹²

With lower wages and productivity in selected fields approaching that of Western Europe, Russia becomes a formidable competitor in even a strictly commercial struggle. And her opportunities in this respect are furthered by the greater inability of Western nations to support to any significant extent the industrialization of underdeveloped countries. Their own dependence on cheap raw materials and their unceasing need to export manufactured goods in increasing measure operates against the transition of the "backward" primary-producing countries into modern industrial nations.

By introducing and developing the capitalist mode of production in other countries through colonization, trade or capital export, the advanced capitalist nations created the conditions of national revolution in all backward countries. These revolutions are still "capitalist revolutions"; but, being directed against both native backwardness and foreign control, they appear as anti-capitalist or anti-imperialist revolutions since they oppose the unity of interests of foreign capital and its native allies in the backward nations. This new "nationalism," which, on the one hand, disrupts the established international division of labor and, on the other, expresses how this division of labor (associated as it is with a particular constellation of accumulated capital) is inadequate for a further *general* capital expansion, affects the imperialist nations as well. The disintegration of the historically-developed world market, as well as the stagnation of capital at the base of this disintegrations, leads them to always fresh attempts to solve national problems either by reshaping the world market or by gaining greater independence from it. The directing of economic policies by governments grows in both types of nations, those seeking expansion by freeing themselves from a controlled world market and those seeking expansion through such controls. The result of both these endeavors is a greater international capital development. Expansion takes place, though not in conformity with the existing centralized and market-determined international capital structure.

Even though faith in competitive capital accumulation is contradicted by America's own economic activity at home and abroad, deviation from that faith is held to be a temporary expediency. America's foreign economic policy is still concerned with the resurrection of a "free," that is, American-controlled world market and the resumption of "genuine" capital accumulation, i.e., for the augmentation of private capital. All "non-profitable" activities associated with the extra-market

expansion of production are undertaken not for their own sake, but are regarded as expenditures to keep the world open to American capital expansion. In view of America's dominant position in world economy this would imply total re-organization of the world's capital structure and division of labor and subordination of all national economies to the accumulation requirements of American capital. But this is an impossible task and the sad conclusion follows that "the great era of economic growth which the Western world has experienced may finally come to an end—not because of technological limitations but rather because of market limitations . . . for the political and ideological difficulties to be surmounted in bringing about the necessary expansion of world-trade may be greater than people are prepared to face."¹³

Whether it is warranted or not, such pessimism does not form policies. Even if capital concentration and centralization cannot embrace the world, there is still the choice between a larger or smaller slice of it. Although existing state-capitalist systems are irrevocably lost to private capital exploitation, (as George F. Kennan has said, "there is a finality for better or worse, about what has occurred in Eastern Europe."¹⁴) large parts of the world are still wavering between mixed and totalitarian systems of capital production. If the trend of the time favors the latter, that is only one more reason to combat the trend. It is the ostensible success of the state-capitalist systems in maintaining themselves and developing their economies which encourages underdeveloped and hitherto controlled nations to follow their example.

From a strictly private-enterprise point of view, containment of the state-capitalist systems would not be enough. The slowing-down and eventual destruction of all forms of "socialism" seems here a necessary prerequisite for the restriction of governmental economic power in the capitalist nations. From the ruling capitalist point of view, however, government investments in its own defense and in the defense of allied nations are not only a way of combating the external state-capitalist threat; they are a medium for maintaining a necessary level of economic activity at home. Further increases in government expenditures arouse no fear so long as they promise to create an economic situation in which the *absolutely* increased government spending is *relatively* smaller because of a much larger profitable private capital expansion. This, then, is the goal of investments for defense. If it succeeds in stopping the further spread and expansion of competitive social systems, it will secure a larger base of operation for private capital. The existence of such a base still does not guarantee successful capital accumulation, but without it, expansion has no chance at all.

Propaganda to the contrary notwithstanding, American economic foreign policy directs itself to the possible—that is, to attempting to maintain its present dominant position in world economy. This, of course, includes attempting to maintain, gain, or regain influence in and control over accessible parts of the world. Respect for the freedom

and self-determination of other societies, it is said, does not "require the West to surrender its own security and its truly vital economic interests in the name of self-determination which insists upon expressing itself in a *national* form."¹⁵ Though little can be done about existing state-capitalist systems, new ones must not arise. The "free world" must not shrink nor must the nations comprising it contradict the economic interests of the West, i.e., American interests on which the economies of the Western world depend. In brief, the defense of the West is the defense of the *status quo*, fortified by the hope, if not the conviction, that even a divided world still offers opportunities for capital expansion.

"Co-existence," once an empty phrase, constitutes for the time being an acceptable basis for American foreign policy. The struggle for a "free world" has, however reluctantly, given way to the attempt to maintain Western capitalism in its present form. In all probability the turning point came with the Chinese revolution and Russia's possession of atomic weapons. There was also a purely internal movement away from the war-gearred economy. Depression and war hasten the decline of private enterprise. And though armament production may forestall a depression, war, as it is now waged, may easily lead to the complete extinction of private enterprise economy. In any case, the degree of government control over the American economy, fostered by a decade of depression and the second world war, was out of all proportion to social power relations as they actually prevailed and the persistent individualistic ideology. The fear grew "that the larger intervention of government in the areas of what has been private business, undertaken in the hours of military danger and continued over a time whose end is not in sight, will become a permanent part of the American way of life."¹⁶ The reaction against this tendency is a reaction against economic militarization and war.

V

Production for defense involves far more than just armaments. The economy is constantly being reorganized to cope with frequent shifts of power positions due to political, economic, and strategic changes. The military apparatus, consisting of branches of the armed forces and the economic, scientific and administrative machinery behind them, becomes increasingly more expensive because of both quantitative growth and qualitative changes. Technological innovations are undertaken without regard to cost in order to gain advantages over the potential enemy. All this leads to intensive economic activity and the increasing productivity supports constantly growing non-productive efforts. But the previous trend of capital accumulation, the concentration of surplus-value as private capital, changes into concentration in the hands of government. *If constantly maintained, and even without war, this process must lead to a complete change of the capitalist system.* Since

the trend is visible through social change as well as through the separate experiences of individual capitals, private-property interests must oppose it even if their immediate profit requirements force them to support it.

The capacity to produce an abundance of waste-matter is greater in some countries than in others; the capitalist nation most productive in this respect is also the strongest in military terms. It sets the standard for waste-production and induces such production in countries still capable of real capital formation. Russia, for instance, need not be faced with the problem of "over-production" even if there was a complete cessation of armament production. It is not only because of her general backwardness and need to expand production of both capital and consumption goods; it is also because—theoretically—her social organization allows for a nationally-planned determination of both the volume and the direction of production. The kind of planning actually undertaken is, of course, determined by the needs of the class-divided country within the setting of international power politics. All the possible advantages of complete government control can thus be only partly enjoyed. The fate of Russian economy remains bound to the fate of capitalism in general. In principle, however, and assuming that Russia existed in an unassailable state of isolation, she could for some time to come engage in "genuine" capital accumulation.

Even now Russia experiences an enhanced capital expansion, but this expansion is not of the type that spelled the rise of capitalism. It is the type characteristic of its decline. "Over-production," which hitherto arose out of over-accumulation and capital stagnation, now accompanies as waste-production the very first stages of capital expansion and even that of primitive accumulation. In this way, ascending state-capitalism finds its way blocked by the descending private enterprise system. Private enterprise, still on top in terms of production and productivity, helps determine the character of state-capitalist production and its exploitative social relations. Waste-production is thus a form of competition between the "people's socialism" and the "people's capitalism," in which the advantages are still on the side of Western capitalism.

State-capitalist governments, representing the economic system in ascendancy, favor peace. They will, of course, go to war in defense of their existence or to hold their own and acquired territories and even perhaps when war appears to be a short-cut to imperialist goals—a convenience rather than a risk. Yet, being still behind leading capitalist nations economically, an all-out war would push them even farther back whether they were to emerge "victors" or "losers." Though born of war and revolution, they do not see them as necessary to expansion—at any rate, not at this juncture. Armaments production on its present scale, which to the Western world presents a temporary, if dubious, way out of an insoluble dilemma, is to them an even heavier burden that

hinders their development and postpones the realization of their goal—to reach and over-reach Western capitalism.

“Economic interests” hitherto often made for war. Now they have apparently become a deterrent to war in spite of and because of armament production which, in size and destructiveness, has no counterpart in history. Neither the capitalists nor the state-capitalist nations are ready to drive their antagonisms to the point of war, not merely because of their mutual respect for the destructiveness of modern weapons, but also because of their concern with capital accumulation in both its traditional private and modern national form.

VI

The drive of private enterprise systems to keep on accumulating in the traditional way and ascending state-capitalisms are, so to speak, only the two main rivers of development. They are flooded by many contributory streams of independent source. Rising nationalism in backward nations and social struggles in advanced countries, though often losing their identity by having to assert themselves within the larger conflict between traditional and totalitarian capitalisms, assert themselves nevertheless and turn the wider social struggles into something more than just a contest between two different, yet interlocked, systems of capital production. The amalgam of contradictory social trends prevents any stable partition of the world into two opposing unified camps and therewith a peace based on an understanding or compromise between the two great contenders for world rule, Russia and the United States.

The present line-up of opposing nations is as temporary and polymorphous as was the division of the world into fascist and anti-fascist powers during the second world war. It is, in fact, a mere consequence of the last war, not the result of conscious efforts to unify part of the world behind one or another principle of social organization. Dependent nations will follow the policies of the great powers only so long as their power prevails, and a nation's power prevails only so long as it grows. Stagnation for one implies expansion for the other just because the world is not partitioned into two large, unified camps. In order to avoid stagnation, each power must increase its economic strength and therewith maintain and enlarge its influence over other nations, for economic expansion is now coupled to imperialistic control in such a way that the one is a pre-condition of the other.

Without doubting the sincerity of the desire for peace among Eastern as well as Western nations, their unavoidable economic expansion will necessarily re-open the question of crisis and war. “Co-existence” has no future, as it involves transforming capitalist mixed economy into complete government control. A failure to stop the further growth of state-capitalist systems must lead to the nationalization of capital in countries still largely dependent on a market-expansion of capital pro-

duction. Economic crisis is no longer a solution because of its restriction in space and because of altered social conditions in which depression, no less than armament production, involves the further growth of the "public sector" of the economy.

Moreover, alternating between "toward" and "away from" government-induced production does not await the actual expansion or contraction of the economy. The "mixed economy," containing both friends and foes of governmental control, displays both tendencies simultaneously. Internal political struggles may determine which tendency is emphasized. But in a crisis, all capitalist governments resort to economic controls to save themselves and the system to which they are committed. Political groupings least concerned with prevailing property relations will go farthest in applying government controls. And thus it comes about, in the "democracies," that is, that in a real or even manufactured "national emergency," governmental power will often go to those groups ready to extend governmental control. This explains the existence of political groups that favor "national emergencies" as a vehicle leading to their success.

Business activities relate to the present, not to the long-run trend towards nationalization; but as the former are only a part of the latter, they defeat their cause by serving it. At the same time that capitalists fight the encroachment of government, they look for government protection and subsidies. For the immediate gain, they destroy their future; yet, to have a future presupposes immediate gain. Their inconsistencies make up political platforms: reduction of the government budget on the one hand and a rise in the debt-limit on the other. This ambiguity is all-pervading; in order to make secure as much as possible of the old property relations, policies are evolved which undermine the existing capital structure even more; the defense of the *status quo* hastens the social transformation process and the latter strengthens the desire to stop the metamorphosis of capitalism—a vicious circle which can be broken only by social catastrophe.

The nations of the Eastern power block, whether captive or free, see in their own existence the future of the world economy. As products of recent history, they do not believe in restoring past conditions and power relations. They are in any case determined to defend their new position in the world economy, that is to defend the newly-evolved ruling classes which are based on somewhat different property relations and changed ideologies while defending the nation. As all decisive social changes favor certain interests and suppress others, they cannot conceive of a peaceful abdication of power groups. As they see it, transforming a partly-controlled social system of capital production into totalitarian state-capitalism involves social struggles and war and they find it necessary to prepare for war.

Though not "inevitable"—there is no force external to human activity which could unleash it—war remains highly probable as the pre-

pared for, yet undesired result of relentless competition between East and West for economic and political advantages in the world economy, of national competition and competition for power positions within nations. Even so, war will occur only in the absence of social forces ready and strong enough to prevent it. Since such social forces may arise, the question of whether a third world war is "inevitable" may be answered by the simple procedure of looking around for trends and movements opposing it. Here, the picture is disappointing despite increasing agitation for peace and obvious inclinations to reduce armaments. For the desire for peace restricts itself to verbal statements which are unconnected with any activity able to turn the tide of history. No attempts are made or even suggested to alter social relations that require crisis, war and revolution to adapt themselves to changing economic circumstances. The hope for peace rests on nothing more than the "accidental" nature of major occurrences in capitalism, on the possibility that an uncontrolled shift of situations may postpone and prevent a violent solution of accumulating contradictions.

FOOTNOTES

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- ¹⁴ *The New York Times*, May 7, 1956.
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COMING IN DISSENT

Alexander Herzen—by George Woodcock
 The American "Income Revolution"—by Gabriel Kolko
 Notes on the Suez Crisis—by Lewis Coser

"THE POWER ELITE": TWO VIEWS

I

Bernard Rosenberg

As an explanation of the higher circles in American life, *The Power Elite** is enormously valuable. One can scarcely overpraise C. Wright Mills for this latest installment in a series that, if continued, may assume almost Balzacian proportions. Not that he is invulnerable. The careful reader might object to his excessive voluntarism (are the rich as free as he makes them out to be, and if not, doesn't Mills himself intimate that the explanation lies in a *general* loss of autonomy?) There are omissions. Perhaps the power of American Catholicism has been underestimated. More data would be welcome—if anyone had them. Certain facts, which no other student of American society has troubled to collect with such skill, require even more sifting than Mills has given them. He eschews the dictum of Franz Boas who said, "Never draw conclusions about anything till you know everything." Since you obviously never know everything, this study bristles with challengeable, if plausible, conclusions. Also, Mills does less than justice to the contemporary relevance of Thorstein Veblen, and about this point I could write a book: in fact, I did.

But all such criticism is picayunish in the face of Mills' extraordinary accomplishment. It strips away whole layers of folklore, chapter by chapter,

* *The Power Elite* by C. Wright Mills. Oxford University Press. \$6.00.

until only the core is left for us to contemplate. In this analysis, as in *White Collar*, sense on social stratification has been carefully disentangled from the nonsense in which it is usually embedded. Mills scorns the simple extrapolation from small town to universe that is so common among writers on American society. He nevertheless brilliantly anatomizes the small town, and then goes on to illumine the whole American scene.

We see "the warlords, the corporation chieftains, the political directorate" in proper perspective. They are a powerful *troika* ruling the United States in tandem and by committee, as other countries and all their institutions are currently run. The dominant committee has high-ranking personnel made up of interlocking and interchangeable parts. Between the uppermost and the nether ranges of our class system, in this respect, a striking structural similarity has developed.

For a long time, one industrial worker could be replaced by another without causing serious dislocation. Now Mills points to and documents a situation in which, not just Eisenhower and MacArthur but scores of men like them, glide comfortably from military to corporate and political leadership. General Gruenther is a post-*Power Elite* example. Newspaper accounts indicate that, in view of his business opportunities, he felt obliged to relinquish a mere general-

ship out of consideration for his wife and children. Although a graduate of West Point and not the Harvard School of Business Administration, he will blend naturally into an executive suite. Clearly, it is only a stone's throw from NATO to BBD and O. If no extensive technical training is required of underdogs, very little, perhaps less, is demanded of their betters. Ike's highly recommended "posture of confidence" appears to matter more than knowledge, a commodity that can always be tapped from the lower levels, or not at all.

By contrast with American workers, the elite is a compact social and psychological entity whose members "accept one another, understand one another, marry one another, tend to work and to think if not together at least alike." Mills argues, wastefully, that this group should not be called a "ruling class." My opinion is that the old label still fits, and that his book provides the best evidence as to how it still fits. However, I do not feel that a matter which is essentially semantic should be the occasion for apoplexy that it has become in some quarters (cf., the review by Robert Lynd in *The Nation*). What matters is that Mills has demonstrated the presence of a highly active class consciousness, inculcated in childhood and systematically sustained thereafter, in the ruling circles of American society—and has demonstrated this more fully and with greater contemporary relevance than those who criticize him for not using the concept of class. It is the substance, not the terminology, of Mills' presentation that matters most.

The movers, or at least, the shakers, of American society are a very mobile lot—in the sense that they travel a great deal, and not in the sense that they have all risen from humble origins (a myth, and one among several,

adroitly exploded by Mills.) When in 1952 Stevenson and Eisenhower flew to Kasson for the purpose of promising farmers 90%, or 100%, or if necessary, 150%, parity price supports, they were joined by a number of wealthy husbandmen who had also flown—in their own airplanes. But businessmen, Mills notes, now fly nearly four million hours a year in private planes, or more hours than all scheduled airlines put together! Corporations generally provide the planes, along with other fringe benefits. They have helped to create a special style of tax free social life. Among those aids to gracious living enumerated by Mills, if not by the Department of Internal Revenue, are the following:

... free medical care, payments of club fees, financial and legal advice, company lawyers and accountants available for tax, financial and legal advice, facilities for entertaining customers, private recreation areas—golf courses, swimming pools, gymnasiums—scholarship funds for sons of executives, company automobiles, and dining rooms for executive use... 'A company dedicated to keeping its officers happy,' one reliable observer recently noted 'can with all propriety have a company airplane for business trips and a yacht and a hunting-fishing lodge in the north woods to entertain its biggest customers.... At home the executives can also ride around in company-owned and chauffeured automobiles....

Lately, its encomiasts have taken to calling the American economy by a strange name. Not satisfied with appropriating Trotsky's phrase, The Permanent Revolution, they now propose to steal from Stalin too. What we have, Rakosi help us, is a People's Capitalism. Like Ike's homey references to a "family" of little weapons with atomic warheads, these terms are used unblushingly. The People's Capitalism in a permanent state of Revolution provides the "joy of suffering"

for unemployed automobile workers, as an official of the government has so neatly put it, and perquisites like those allotted to the Soviet elite, for its leaders. Business executives are propertied; they do have goodly incomes; but none of that adds up to the colossal trappings supplied by corporate welfare. An impersonal subsidy, whether public or private, permits the Chairman and the Commissioner to live it up.

Conventional observers have habitually distracted us from the upper to the middle levels of power, confounding one with the other. Nothing Mills has done is as important as making clear the social difference between the two. Neither entertainers nor Congressmen nor labor leaders have any real voice in the ultimate "yes" or "no" that determines whether an H bomb will be dropped, whether we will go to war, whether we will live or die. No doubt the celebrity occupies a place of honor greater than that accorded his predecessors at any other time in human history. Pugilists and publicists advise the President on how to combat juvenile delinquency while the criminologist is ignored. Charlie Wilson was in earnest, as always, when he suggested Arthur Godfrey, a man without wit, talent or intelligence, but one who prizes humility in his employees, as propaganda chief for the Cold War. This is the star system, and Mills abominates it. Nevertheless, he understands the essentially subordinate role of the celebrity.

We have to do with an uneven organization of power. A congressman's campaign expenses make it prohibitive for him to operate without big backing. In a rare burst of candor, the Washington correspondent, Roscoe Drummond, noted recently that the campaign contributor is likely to be: 1) a man seeking personal aggrandizement of some sort; or, 2) a

man attempting to buy votes for a special interest; or, 3) a criminal needing protection for himself and the underworld. Neither saints nor millionaires are ordinarily attracted to the Congress. Lesser breeds have to repay those who help them, and those who help them are at the command posts of modern American civilization. While, at the center, pressure groups establish a kind of balance, in the top echelons of government, as in private corporations, the rule realistically stated by Mills is co-optation of one's own kind.

Even the most obtuse reviewers have expressed a grudging admiration for *The Power Elite*. That they should also have been stung and, as most of them put it, "infuriated" by the book was only to be expected. For Mills has presented his picture against a backdrop of the mass society so ably drawn that it cannot but cause the sensitive to shriek and the less than sensitive to cry, "Foul."

What does it mean to say that we have a mass society? For one thing, it means that the great American Public is becoming more and more inconsequential. What public opinion is no one knows with any exactitude, although Herbert Blumer has said that public opinion is what public opinion polls poll. At the very least, it presupposes the existence of controversies and difference of opinion about how to resolve them. Thus, strictly speaking, there can be no public opinion, although there may be a great deal of private opinion, in a totalitarian society. How far we have moved toward the destruction of public opinion may be measured by 1956 as an election year without a single substantive issue that politicians are ready to debate. The public, already a phantom thirty years ago—Mills reminds us of Walter Lippmann's phrase—has been converted into a crowd with at-

tendant loss of critical self-consciousness. A crowd may be manipulated from centralized points of control where the Public becomes processed cheese, and a mass mind emerges into which new attitudes are pumped overnight.

Voluntary associations, in order to be effective, take on the shape and quality of mass organizations. Resolutions rammed down everyone's throat by the AMA or the American Legion, reflect the members' impotence and their virtual loss of identity. Atomized individuals are dependent upon mass association and mass communication for the dream image of reality that is built into their foggy worldview. And the schools will not help, since they too are becoming a mass medium. An academician may think he has reached the end of his tether when a large number of university students need remedial reading courses. However, audiovisual aids make even functional illiteracy an adequate base for education.

McGraw-Hill has just sent me a sample chapter from its spanking new edition of a popular textbook, *Sociol-*

ogy, by Arnold W. Green. The publisher's pitch includes pointing proudly to new study aids such as "Six motion pictures with sound track" that "have been produced in correlation with the text." I take a typical passage—and it is typical not only of this book but of a standard American unity—from the sample chapter which is on recreation in America:

The majority of adult Americans are law-abiding, work hard, save money, spend a great deal of time at home and love their children. Most of their lives are lived within groups, organized and informal. They are notably humanitarian in impulse, cooperative and gregarious. But the dominant themes of their mass entertainment, described later in the chapter, reveal nothing about or grossly distort how that majority live.

The luckless student, who is legion, will have to absorb this pap with correlated movies. For the reading public, that fraction of a fraction not afflicted with saddle sores from riding the new Patriotic hobbyhorse, here, thank heavens, is a *book* by C. Wright Mills.

II

E. V. Walter

In *Power Elite* one may discern three tasks: (1) to describe the locus of power and its organization in American society, (2) to interpret this power configuration, explain its causes and the direction of its movement, (3) to pass judgment on it. These are no mean tasks, and to accomplish any one of them is to write an important book. In my opinion, Mills accomplishes the first task but falls short of the others. Con-

flict between his convictions or values on the one hand, and his theory (with its implicit values) on the other hand, renders his interpretation ambiguous and inconclusive. Likewise, his moral judgment of the power system is ineffectual—for while his indignation is genuine enough and the power elite is guilty as charged, his denunciation of its "irresponsibility" has no ground in the context of his theory.

Still, even the one task accomplish-

ed raises *Power Elite* to the rank of an important book. Reviewers from Center and Right have fulminated against it, of course, for Mills is not content to criticize (liberals find it safe enough to do that) but, in the radical tradition, has the high temerity to *accuse*. The most hostile readers, however, admit that they have learned something from the book, and in some of the public discussion it provokes, there is evidence of an inclination toward genuine searching and debate. The effect is important in itself, for in our day the recognition that ideas are weapons has all but eclipsed the knowledge that ideas are also ideas, and the gadfly, virtually losing his Socratic function, is now engaged solely as a partisan—a force to repel or annex. Impressed into service, the Controversial Book has almost lost its right to be read as a source of illumination, and the writer struggles in vain for the dignity of true attention.

ALTHOUGH *Power Elite* offers an interesting description of the power system, the internal conflict of the book's premises and its failure to come to grips with important problems of power renders it ambiguous and indecisive as an *interpretation*. Behind its method of investigation lies the assumption that the techniques of empirical sociological investigation are ideologically neutral and may be employed in the service of whatever "values" the investigator happens to hold. It is my contention, however, that elite theory does more than describe and explain objective phenomena of power. Its very presuppositions contain a latent ideological bias, and the theoretical defects in Mills's book spring from the collision between

this hidden bias and his own radical convictions.

Each age has its dominant institutions, the elite theory assumes, and power means the control of these institutions. In our time, Mills argues, status means control of the institutions of celebrity, economic power means control of the forces of production, and political power means control of the executive branch of the national government. Thus the concept of power is reduced to a *realpolitische* notion—a "conquest" theory of politics. "All politics is a struggle for power; the ultimate kind of power is violence," Mills claims. The military and the police derive their importance "from the simple fact that violence is the final support of power and the final resort of those who would contest it." Thus Mills moves in the tradition of Machiavelli, Pareto, Mosca, Michels and James Burnham, equipped, however, with the theoretical baggage of academic sociology.

This conception of power is the weakest point in Mills's argument and, as I will try to show, makes a number of assumptions about the nature of society and history that are inconsistent with any form of genuine radicalism. But first it is important to see that, despite the seductive appeal of its grimness, it is an unrealistic notion. Mere *Realpolitik*, which makes a fetish of power, confusing power with force and violence, regarding any other interpretation as sentimental and extravagant, is actually a position as credulous as it is stark.

A FREQUENT source of incoherence in political thought, as D. D. Cooperman has observed, is the confusion of three

distinct realities—power, force, and violence. In any given society, power is defined by its limits—intrinsic and extrinsic—in other words, by the system in which it is constrained. Moreover, persuasion and not coercion is the clue to power, and violence is not the apotheosis of power but the failure of power. As the late Franz Neumann put it, “Failure to evoke emotional or intellectual responses in the ruled compels the ruler to resort to simple violence, ultimately to liquidation.”

The ruling class is impelled to impress on the world its own image. It does so not cynically but with a sense of mission—with the desire to convert society to its view of “reality.” Acquiescence of the ruled to this version of man and the world creates an apparent union of interest between ruler and ruled, obscuring the real differences in their positions. Thus, the ideology of consumption in the United States has all but eliminated an awareness of class antagonisms. The ruling class has not isolated itself as a consuming and enjoying class but has converted the rest of society and remade it in its image, propagating the maxim, “Everyman a Consumer.” As long as men think of themselves as producers, the difference between workers and employers is all too clear, but their identity as consumers conceals this difference.

The necessity of persuasion is an intrinsic limitation on the exercise of power, for groups seeking to rule must express their particular interests in universal terms, that is, as ideologies. For obvious reasons, power in the modern state requires control of the government, and such control is not possible without acquiescence of the party system. Rivalry of parties in a constitutional democracy forces sel-

fish interests to provide themselves with an ideology and actively to seek mass support, for unless they gain adherents recruited from circles beyond the original nucleus, they can come nowhere near gaining a majority. The added members who bind themselves to the party through allegiance to its idea can insist on party “integrity” and consistency with the official ideology, thus delivering the party over to the logic of the idea, even, sometimes, at the expense of the original interests. This social process, functioning as an intrinsic limitation on power, Hegel recognized as the “trick of reason” which forces unwilling interests to become universalized. Mills protests that the noisy strife of parties and pressure groups has been displaced to the middle levels of power, and he is right, but unless these organizations are “convinced,” they will not remain content in the middle but instead seek opportunity to act as revolutionary or reactionary parties.

Mills is correct in observing that control of the executive-administrative apparatus is now the highest degree of state power. Even here, however, the same intrinsic limitations operate. Every policy chief knows that he can get nowhere with an unfriendly bureaucracy. The people occupying key positions and even middle-level positions must be “persuaded” or else their resistance is a formidable obstacle to the exercise of power. Since these positions number in the thousands and the salaries are unattractive, they cannot be recruited from the upper classes that staff the power elite; hence there must be an ideological identification between them and the political directorate. The magnitude of the 1953 “changeover” in the civil service indicates the importance that

the Republican directorate attached to the ideology of their bureaucrats.

If space permitted, it would be possible to discuss other intrinsic limitations; e.g., the inertia of the bureaucratic fly-wheel and the universality of law. The latter, of course, besides maintaining a predictable order to permit economic life, performs as well an indispensable ethical function. To say that anything may be done if the elite wills it, is to ignore the fact that certain rules of conduct must be observed if society is to hold together at all.

POWER is expressed in legal norms which are stated in universal categories applying to the rulers as well as the ruled. I am not denying that the powerful can bend particular laws to suit their purposes or that the law often conceals the true locus of power, but legality itself is a web that catches the predator as well as the prey. Hence, key men in the power system are not only the soldier or the policeman but the lawyer, whose expert knowledge of illegality as well as of the law is indispensable for getting safely through the maze.

I am not arguing for an equilibrium theory of power according to which power is more or less equitably distributed in America among a number of balanced pressure groups; I believe with Mills that it is an anachronistic and fatuous notion serving only to obscure the realities of power. But Mills's elite theory only dimly perceives these realities of power for they are buried in the system and only partially reflected in the actions of the powerful. To cluck one's tongue over tax swindles, expense accounts, airplane rides, and the vocational versatility of generals is to be so dazzled by the obvious as to miss

the significant. Elite theory cannot take us very far in discerning the *inner* workings and *hidden* mechanisms of power, or even raise the important questions.

The elite theory is a poor substitute for the old theory of a ruling class which went much further than mere description of the external phenomena of power. It sought out the economic basis of the entire circle from which the rulers were drawn and examined the process which transformed their interests and imagination into (Pascal's phrase) the cords which bound the state. As the reviewer in the *London Times Literary Supplement* observes, it might have been more accurate to name it a privileged class rather than a ruling class since nobody claimed that all the members actually took part in the business of ruling. Radical changes in the class structure may have made the old theory of a ruling class obsolete, but the elite theory offers no improvement in its place.

For a space, Mills does engage in class analysis, but insists on holding fast to the elite concept, not from semantic confusion, but from the demands of theory. To explain the political unity of the power triumvirate centered in the government, the military and industry, he finds one "cause" in the cultural homogeneity of the top layers of society. Thus he devotes considerable space to examine the care and feeding of the upper classes and discovers that the old school tie is the most powerful agent in upperclass solidarity. To make the leap from class to elite he is forced to the springboard of exaggeration, and from his account, the success of exclusive schools in shaping the upper-class soul exceeds the most hyperbolic claims of their own cata-

logues. Moreover, the demonstration of cultural homogeneity is inconclusive, for it can be argued that there is greater homogeneity of education and ideals in the middle social levels, which are "stalemated" and impotent, than in the upper classes, which generate the power elite.

ONCE MORE, what is needed is a theory that will recognize the social processes behind the power elite, the mentality which binds it together, and, above all, the direction of its movement. The snapshot view that Mills gives us omits a great deal. It is important to know whether the solidarity of his power triumvirate is a temporary convergence or whether it is becoming a permanent Establishment. Concentrating on its internal structure, we are apt to forget that it is affected in turn by the consequences of its impact on the world. It is important to know where the power system is going. The fact that policy is made by upper-class elites who are constitutionally unable to understand the revolutionary elites of new nations is a source of international conflict which will affect reciprocally the internal balance of power. It is important to know what conditions will set the now convergent interests of the triumvirate against one another, for, since Aristotle, social theorists have been aware that in an oligarchy the source of revolt is dissension in the ruling class.

The halcyon prosperity of the garrison economy cannot last forever; projecting its course, the alternatives seem to be economic dislocation or war. In the case of an economic chaos produced by technological unemployment or by the collapse of the permanent war economy, the stability of the triumvirate promises to be upset by the domination of one component.

The trouble with the elite theory is that it blinds one to the real potential for fundamental social change inherent in every historic situation. It inclines the empirical observer to believe that contemporary trends will endure forever and that whoever has the upper hand at the moment of observation is invincible. In traditional elite theory, history is inseparable from the notion that human nature remains fairly constant throughout, that men are always equipped with an irrational yen for power, that society moves cyclically in perpetual struggle between "ins" and "outs," and that there is an immutable division between rulers and ruled. As George Orwell has observed, in this view:

humanity is divided into two classes: the self-seeking, hypocritical minority, and the brainless mob whose destiny is always to be led or driven, as one gets a pig back to the sty by kicking it on the bottom or by rattling a stick inside a swill bucket, according to the needs of the moment.

With its cyclical view of history and its focus on the forces of stability, the elite theory is usually wedded to a conservative ideology, yet its ideological range does not exclude liberalism. Nevertheless, seizure of power is still the key. When the liberals are "out," the masses are inert, kept in subjection by force and propaganda, for the benefit of selfish interests. Unless the liberal elite lives up to its responsibility of leadership, the argument goes, bad or misguided men will run things by default. Therefore, the strategy of the liberal elite calls for a palace revolution (bloodless and lawful) in which the children of light will conquer the forces of darkness, followed by an era of pro-

gressive reform, in which *existing* institutions will be run by efficient social engineers with a minimum of friction and waste. In the elite theory, political tutelage is the liberal counterpart of conservative quietism.

The elite theory permits an ideological range from conservatism to liberalism but is incompatible with any thoroughgoing radical position. It is true that there are elite theories which have begun in a radical spirit, but the combination does not survive success—witness the similar theoretical metamorphoses of any number of successful revolutionists as diverse as Lenin and Chiang. After the seizure of power, the elite theory justifies transforming the vanguard of the revolution into the old guard of the new regime.

TO GO BEYOND the defects of the elite theory we must be prepared to ask old and new questions. Asking why men want power is an old question, but it must be asked in new form. Now that the machine has eliminated the mechanical reasons for drudgery and subjection and consequently the archaic grounds for class divisions based on them, why do class lines persist? As Orwell put the question to Burnham; "Why does the lust for naked power become a major human motive exactly *now*, when the dominion of man over man is ceasing to be necessary?" To answer that power and domination are based on an instinct—a *libido dominandi*—is to take refuge behind an ancient tautology and to tell us nothing.

A. A. Berle and other liberals, in reviewing *Power Elite*, have pointed out that in the context of his system of analysis there are no grounds from which Mills can logically hurl the charge of moral "irresponsibility" against the power elite. The apologists for the power system will say that concentration of power is a necessary evil justified by the "success" of the welfare state. We never had it so good, they sing, and Berle asks the old army question: If we're so fouled up, how come we're still here? (The old army answer, Berle neglects to mention, is that the enemy is more fouled up than we are.)

For radical criticism to have any meaning it must utter its judgments from some moral norm that transcends the system, or from some standard that recognizes an immanent, unfulfilled potential in the existing state of things. Otherwise, radicalism becomes a sour grapes posture—a power lust bewailing its impotence—and the radical stands alone, not as a pariah but merely as a wallflower. Elitism is incompatible with the character of radical humanism—the conviction that man makes himself; the knowledge that freedom is found in history; a sanguine attitude toward fundamental social change; and a frame of mind that acknowledges the remarkable plasticity of human institutions.

C. Wright Mills has given us an important book, but a disconcerting one. It is hard to tell a man that his style of architecture is splendid, but that the foundation is laid on sand.

HUMAN RIGHTS IN OKINAWA

Helen Mears

Top military men... believe that Okinawa has decided advantages over Japan and the Philippines as a site for American air bases. They point out that in Japan and the Philippines the US must deal with independent governments which may not always be so favorably inclined to the idea of playing host to US military forces. In both countries there is organized—and-vocal opposition to the leasing of bases to the US. (US NEWS AND WORLD REPORT, June 1951)

The US formally recognized today full Philippines sovereignty over US military bases in this island republic... It said the US would turn over the full title to all bases but did not say when. (NEW YORK TIMES, July 4, 1956)

Some may consider us naive when we speak of God-given rights, of the dignity of man and the equal sovereignty of all peoples. If these are simple views, then we are proud to be a simple people. We know that you will share these views for you too believe that the greatness of nations is judged by eternal standards of right and wrong, and not by the accident of military and economic power. (VICE-PRESIDENT NIXON, Manila, July 3, 1956)

On July 4 the New York *Times* reported a speech by Vice-President Nixon in Manila. This speech was considered so important that it was given two front-page stories. In the same issue the *Times* gave 32 lines to a report from Tokyo that the Japanese Government hoped to confer with the US Government, in order to get better treatment for the citizens of the US-governed Japanese island of Okinawa. Taken together these two stories explain why the US has such difficulty persuading the “neutralist” governments that its intentions toward Asia are democratic and humane. Mr. Nixon presented the idealistic words; the item from Tokyo called attention to the reality.

I

Okinawa is an island group, part of the Ryukyu island chain which stretches in an arc southwest from Japan. Its people are ethnically, culturally and linguistically close to the Japanese. Before the war Okinawa was a province of Japan with representatives in the Tokyo Diet. The war-time declarations of the Big Three, announcing their intention to dismember the Japanese Empire did not mention Okinawa, and it was probably assumed that the islands were an integral part of Japan. During the war US military forces took the islands, and at the end of the war the US Navy governed them as an adjunct of the occupation of Japan.

The strategic advantages of Okinawa soon became apparent to the US military leaders who were ruling Japan. General MacArthur pointed out that by taking over the Japanese islands in the Pacific the US had turned the Pacific Ocean into an "American lake" and military opinion stressed the need for a "Gibraltar" close to the coast of China from which the Far East could be dominated. The State Department apparently shared this view of the strategic importance of Okinawa but was aware of the need for a formula which would "legalize" retention of the island as an American base *after* the occupation of Japan. The formula, as worked out, was stated with admirable directness by Secretary of State Dean Acheson on Jan. 12, 1950: "We will at an appropriate time offer to hold [the Ryukyus] under trusteeship of the UN... But they are essential parts of the defense perimeter of the Pacific and they must and will be held."

This formula was written into the Japanese Peace Treaty which provided that Japan "will concur in any proposal of the US to the UN" to place certain islands including the Ryukyus under its trusteeship system "with the US as the sole administering authority." It provided further that: "Pending the making of such a proposal and affirmative action thereon the US will have the right to exercise all and any powers of administration, legislation, and jurisdiction over the territory and inhabitants of these islands, including their territorial waters."

It was this provision, written into the Japanese Peace Treaty, along with the requirement that the Japanese Government must sign a Mutual Defense Treaty guaranteeing the US continued occupation of military bases in Japan—that caused India (as well as the USSR) to refuse to sign the Peace Treaty at San Francisco, on the grounds that such requirements abrogated Japanese sovereignty.

The US, of course, never did suggest a UN trusteeship, and although the legal position was equivocal, continued to govern the territory as an absolute possession. This situation caused dissatisfaction in both Okinawa and Japan. Responding to such pressures the State Department gradually evolved a new formula which restored Japan's "residual sovereignty" while reaffirming US control. This formula was made explicit in Japan on June 27, 1956 when US Ambassador Allison announced in Tokyo that Okinawa would be returned to Japan "when tensions relax in the Far East."

This formula reasserts the right of the US to control the island for an indefinite period; and, the consensus is that the indefinite period will not be short. Secretary of the Army Wilbur Bruckner (*New York Times*, December 31, 1955) was quoted as saying that Okinawa was the US "nerve center of the Pacific now" and that the US could retain control for "many many years."

II

Eleven years after the end of the war, the US still holds and governs Okinawa as a military dictatorship. Although Okinawans hold administrative offices, they have only token authority. The military government has been described by the American Civil Liberties Union (September 27, 1955)

in these terms: "While the US General in command exercises all the ultimate powers of government, the native legislature is freely elected. Its laws, however, are subject to the commander's veto. The chief executive, a native, is appointed by the General in command without the consent of the legislature, and he in turn appoints all the administrative officials in Okinawa."

This unilateral US policy of detaching Okinawa from Japan in order to create a military base is the sort of fact that is likely to bother the "neutralist" governments when they ponder Mr. Nixon's assurance that "The US wants nothing which belongs to any other people in the world." And their confusion is likely to increase when the plight of the Okinawan people is taken into account. In order to build Okinawa into an "atom-bomb proof base... only 500 miles from Red China" (AP, December 24, 1955), the US military government has carried out a program of land expropriation which has destroyed the homes and livelihood of tens of thousands of small landowners. Incessant demands for more land have led to hunger strikes, island-wide demonstrations, and finally demands for reunion with Japan and the departure of American forces. The situation was summed up by Robert Trumbull (*New York Times*, April 14, 1956), who reported: "Two factors are immediately plain in Okinawa. One is that the US plans to keep the island as a key military base for a long time. The other is that 800,000 inhabitants of the Ryukyu Islands... are unanimous in wanting to see the area returned to Japan. Few if any Americans here would dispute these conclusions."

The unsavory situation in Okinawa, although little recognized by Americans, has been well publicized in Japan, India and Southeast Asia, by way of a report called "Human Rights Problems in Okinawa" based on an investigation made by the Japanese Civil Liberties Union, and published in January 1955. Since this report was widely circulated in Asia, it is worth considering a few excerpts:

The paramount grievance of the Okinawan inhabitants is that their cultivated lands and forests are compulsorily expropriated and their dwelling houses forcibly demolished for the construction of American military bases.

According to figures disclosed by the US Forces in April, 1954, the area they control in Okinawa reached 42,424.5 acres or 14 per cent of the total area and 41.2 per cent of the total cultivated area... Those inhabitants who have lost their lands and were driven out of their dwelling houses were simply thrown out onto the roadside. No steps were taken to guarantee their livelihood. They have degenerated into base-construction workers, transient laborers and slave-wage laborers working for the US Forces in Okinawa.

The sequestration of lands has been carried out through the "Land Expropriation Ordinance" (US Civil Gov. Ordinance No. 109) since April 1953. According to this Ordinance, land ruled as necessary by the US Government may be expropriated irrespective of the wishes of its owner. If the landowner does not consent... the Americans can forcibly expropriate his land in thirty days. In the light of this seizure of their lands, which deprived the inhabitants of their means of livelihood, the owners have repeatedly petitioned the Government or resisted the expropriation with force at times. In such cases, however, military units of US Forces were ordered out to suppress them.

For instance, in December 1953, bulldozers came out into the suburbs of Naha, quite suddenly to start levelling ground in preparation of construction of the attached facilities of the Oroku Air Units... Approximately 1,000 inhabitants,

including school children, blocked the passage of the bulldozers. About 300 GIs armed with bayonets, tear gas, machine guns, etc., were rushed to the spot... They encircled the inhabitants, who had squatted down on the cultivated land, and after reading the US forces' order before them, committed acts of violence upon the inhabitants by beating with rifles and kicking them with their feet, forcing them to move out of the agricultural land...

This account of conditions under US military government more closely resembles the sort of policies we expect of totalitarian governments than those acclaimed by Mr. Nixon. This, however, was only the beginning. The report further charged that although the US compensated the dispossessed people, "the value decided by the US Forces is only one-ninth of the value demanded by the landowners at the prevailing price." It charged that the dispossessed farmers had no choice but to starve or to work for the US military at "slave-labor" rates. It reported that the US authorities employed 100,000 Okinawans "out of whom 64 per cent or 68,000 work for the construction of military bases," and that 80 per cent of these are "men and women who were evicted from the farm villages." It reported further that the US authorities, in setting wage scales, based them on the assumed standard of living of the workers' country of origin. By this standard the wage-scale for Americans ranged from \$6.31 an hour to \$1.06; for Filipinos from \$1.64 to \$0.40; for Japanese technicians from \$0.37 to \$0.21; and for Ryukyuan from \$0.21 to \$0.08. Further:

As a result of this financial stress, spontaneous strikes occurred in 1953 and 1954, with the workers demanding adjustment of wages and other improvements in working conditions. Consistently measures have been taken to obstruct these mass actions with MPs threatening with pistols. Even the formation of a labor union in Okinawa must be submitted to the US Forces for examination and approval.

At the time this report was issued in Japan, spokesmen for the Army's Far East Command called the charges "misleading," "incorrect" and "not supported by the facts." Nonetheless, later investigations, by the Japan Federation of Bar Associations and by a commission of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions have confirmed its overall validity if not all its explicit detail. The major difference between Japanese and American reports is that, in general, American commentators accept as a matter of course the idea that the US military "are forced to" put US strategic aims ahead of the welfare of the Okinawan people. For example, Ralph Braibanti, writing in *The American Political Science Review* for December 1954, explains that "However sympathetic one may be to Ryukyuan problems, a simple unpopular truth must be faced: our primary mission in the islands is strategic. Accordingly military necessity must often trample over Ryukyuan interests."

An AP dispatch from Okinawa (December 24, 1955), makes explicit the basic conflict between the claims of military construction and human welfare:

The US has built its first atom-bomb-proof base on this island, only 500 miles from Red China. But it is a fortress with a headache for the present and a possible Achilles heel for the future.

...only time can tell whether in the long run the American base will be able to survive pressure from demands by all Japanese political parties for the island to be returned to Japan, its technical owner, and from hundreds of thousands of Okinawan farmers.

...Bulldozers are busy, everywhere, scraping and leveling land and extending the air-conditioned underground caverns that house the island's vitals. ...It is taken for granted here that some of the giant caves house an atomic weapons stockpile. The 280mm atomic cannon are here. Planes to carry the big bomb are only hours away.

But while this vast construction program pushes ahead Japan's political parties and Okinawan farmers are pressing their own demands on the islands' limited acres. Many of these latter say they are near starvation and all are upset by the military's inroads into the island's precious farmland. They want the land back for farming.

At the root of the difficulty is the ancient oriental shortage of land: Okinawa is not big enough to meet the demands on its space.

At the end of the war the islands were already crowded. Ignoring this, however, the US military at once "repatriated" some 200,000 Okinawans who had emigrated to other Japanese possessions in the Pacific. The US has sent in around 40,000 people. And the US military have taken 42,424.5 acres of land for US use, expropriating an estimated 76,000 landowners.

From the point of view of the US Government, the Okinawan situation became serious when on June 21 of this year the Japanese Foreign Minister, Mamoru Shigemitsu, officially presented the Okinawan protests and claims. What brought the situation to a boil for the Okinawans was the report of a US Congressional sub-committee that had been considering plans for the expansion of the Okinawa base, which would require the acquisition of land up to 85,843 acres, about double the current holdings. Since the prevailing situation was considered intolerable, the proposal would render it unendurable. Moreover, the Congressional sub-committee, bothered by the cost of the proposed expansion, had recommended that, instead of paying rent for the land, the military should buy it outright for a flat sum amounting to about twenty years expected revenue as the US figured it.

When this news reached Okinawa and Japan it caused an uproar. The proposal that the US should double its holdings and pay for the land outright was a shock to the Okinawans who saw this as implying that the occupation was to be permanent, and that Okinawan rights to their land were increasingly subordinate to the claims of ever-lengthening air-strips and ever-expanding military installations.

The Japanese Socialist Party and organizations of Okinawans began to plan mass meetings, and the Socialists announced that they would ask the Asian-African bloc in the UN to present the problem to the Security Council. In Okinawa, mass meetings were held in fifty-five towns and the entire Ryukyuan government, including the elected legislature, threatened to resign. The Okinawan demands, as passed to the US by the Japanese Minister, ask that the US land seizures be stopped, that an annual rental be instituted at nine times the current rate for lands already taken, and that a time limit be placed on US land tenure.

In Okinawa Lt. Gen. James E. Moore, Deputy Governor of the Ryukyu Islands, told a delegation that:

This is not a time to listen to men who for political reasons, subversive reasons, or reasons of personal gain, whip up agitation on the part of the people, par-

ticularly when the people haven't had an opportunity to understand the full implications of the report. (AP, June 21)

Gen. Moore succeeded in persuading the local government officials not to resign and announced that rentals now being paid by the US, amounting to \$1 million a year, would be tripled from July 1. (*N.Y. Times*, June 20, 1956)

In determining whether the US proposals were "reasonable" and the complaints "subversive," the Okinawans and Japanese would probably contrast the trivial payments, land rent and wages with the impressive sums spent for military installations. So far the US has been paying about \$1 million a year rent to the Okinawans for the 42,424 expropriated acres—which works out at less than \$24 an acre a year. Obviously a minor item in what has been called a "\$588,600,000 investment in security."

Further distress is aroused by the fact that a considerable part of the land taken from Okinawan farmers is used to build superior homes and recreational facilities for increasing numbers of American personnel. A *New York Times* report from Fort Bruckner, Okinawa, published under the heading "Okinawa's Charm and Comforts Make Troops Vie for Duty There," noted of this "pleasant, semi-tropical island" that:

Today, many officers said, housing on Okinawa is the best the US Army affords anywhere in the world... The schools and excellent post-exchange and recreation facilities have made Okinawa an enviable assignment for career servicemen... The average family man is assigned a suburban-style cottage of concrete construction and tiled roof. Each unit has first class heating and kitchen equipment, including a refrigerator.

It is notable that not only does it not occur to the US Government to provide such comforts for its Okinawan labor, but because Okinawans have never had these advantages it is considered "reasonable" to pay them from eight to twenty-one cents an hour; and to take over their farms in order to construct "suburban-style cottages" for American military forces.

III

As of today, the prewar economy of Okinawa is virtually destroyed. Its economic ties with Japan have been broken. The island has been treated as an outpost of the Pentagon and its economic life has been geared to the demands of the US military occupation. Exports last year amounted to \$7 million while imports amounted to \$66 million, and most of these imports were for the benefit of Americans in the islands, or to solve problems (such as food shortages) created by US programs. The gap between exports and imports was made up by American spending in the islands, which means that a major part of Okinawan economic life is highly artificial, remote from the needs of the Okinawan people.

Hints of how the US official mind is grappling with the problem appear now and then in brief press items such as a note from Geneva (August 26, 1955), which reported that "The US is participating in an international project for resettling Okinawans in Bolivia... There are [the report adds ingenuously] too many persons on Okinawa for any of them to prosper." Apparently, however, not much came of this proposal since a news item from Oki-

nawa, eight months later, quoted Lt. Gen. James E. Moore "youthful Deputy Governor" as saying that the emigration and resettlement projects now under way "can at best merely alleviate the situation."

In any event, it seems clear that a policy of forced emigration is likely to challenge rather than confirm Mr. Nixon's assurance of US concern for "God-given rights," "human dignity" and "equal sovereignty of all peoples." For such a policy suggests that the US government believes in its own "God-given right" to transport people into, and out of, their homeland as its shifting strategic design may determine. Great powers usually tend to behave in this autocratic way but they seldom succeed in persuading the people concerned that they are spiritually motivated.

The Okinawan story—better known in Asia than in the US—is deeply disturbing, particularly if contrasted with the oratory of our peripatetic statesmen. "In modern times," declared Mr. Nixon, "the really cruel colonialism has been the colonialism of the Communist worlds." But on Okinawa it is not the Communists who have created misery and discontent, it is US policy which is creating Communists.

Every observer agrees that when US forces took control of Okinawa there were no Communists in the islands. Yet in April of this year, when the Secretary of the Okinawa "People's Party" (which the US military call a Communist-front) was released from prison—where the US military had put him for "concealing a criminal and giving false evidence"—a mass-meeting of some 6,000 Okinawans gathered to cheer him as he demanded the return of Okinawa to Japan. The *New York Times* correspondent added plaintively that "Most Okinawans are so eager to be Japanese again instead of US wards that they do not realize that their nationalist aspirations are being used by the Reds."

●

As long as Okinawa remains a major US military base, human needs will be subordinated to military necessity. And as long as US opposition to Communism takes the form of preparations for military struggle rather than programs for human betterment, the current struggle will resemble the centuries-old contest for the domination of Asia. And so long as the struggle appears as a power contest, the inspirational addresses of our peripatetic statesmen are likely to arouse contempt rather than approval.

When Mr. Nixon told the Filipinos that the US Government had "no sympathy" for those "who treat alike nations that believe in God, and honor, religion and morality, and nations that boast of atheism and the rule of force and terror alone," he was insulting their intelligence. That the US Government claims to "believe in God, honor, religion and morality" does not make more acceptable to the Okinawans the expropriation of their farm-land at a rental low even by Asian standards, and wages from \$0.08 to \$0.21 an hour.

At the beginning of this article is a quotation from Mr. Nixon.

Beautiful words. But as my grandmother used to say, "Handsome is as handsome does."

THE TRAVAIL OF THE U.S. COMMUNISTS

Michael Walzer

Hardly had the leaders of the U.S. Communist Party proclaimed their newly discovered critical mind, then the workers of Poznan gave them a dramatic opportunity to exhibit it. Could the CP extend its "criticism" to areas unspecified in Khrushchev's report, even to unpermitted areas? It was a test of newly acquired virtue which the devil himself might have devised.

On July 2 the *Daily Worker* answered the devil in a way that must have warmed his heart. Its editorial response to the suppression of the Polish workers' strike might have come at any time in a thirty-odd year history of unthinking obedience. It admitted only as much as the Polish government had already admitted: that many justified grievances existed. And it made the same accusation as Radio Moscow had broadcast to the world:

"...this was no 'spontaneous' uprising, but a long planned instigation ... pent-up grievances were exploited for ulterior motives... Americans who abhor the idea of anyone interfering in our country to stir up force and violence will be justified in demanding an accounting from both Allen Dulles and brother John..."

The Poznan editorial reveals the deepest sickness of the Communist Party. It reveals a condition which Khrushchev would not, and probably

could not, alter. His report was so much a diagnosis, however, that the disease demanded some attention. So it was necessary for the patient to stage his own mock cure. And amid the confusion of the medicine men a few individuals managed to make their escape.

I
The ritual of "criticism was inaugurated by those in the party who possessed a minimum of merely tactical sensitivity. They threw open the letter columns of the *Daily Worker* and proclaimed a new era of democratic discussion in the CP. But many veterans of previous party-line somersaults saw no reason for such fuss. James Allen, an old party hand, claimed that *Worker* editorials demanding further "explanations" from Khrushchev smacked of "intervention" in the affairs of the socialist nation. He warned that the stream of letters which greeted the paper's invitation might "turn into a destructive flood" unless it was given direction. But John Gates, *Worker* editor, proved the better medicine man. "Criticism," he insisted, was necessary to "repair and restore" the battered moral authority of the "countries of socialism." Whether in fact that is possible or not is beside the point. Gates' method, as opposed to that of Allen, did at least permit a few unhappy let-

ter-writers to react publicly with shock, confusion, shame and anger. For the CP to survive, if it can at all, this public recantation is indispensable.

It must be said that the number of such letter writers was few. One correspondent wrote, as if defensively, that the letters were a "weak reflection of the deep inner turmoil that is rocking the party membership today." That may well have been so; in July a CP official admitted that "small groups" were leaving the party. Perhaps the man who wrote in to say simply, "It will never be the same again," spoke for the many who left. But only one letter, among the many which have appeared in the *Worker's* columns since March, publicly challenged all "explanation" and expressed complete disillusionment. It was addressed to the party's national committee: "You said that the evils bared 'created a peril for socialism.' In my opinion the evils summed up spell something which was not socialism. It isn't the socialism we've dreamed of and worked for all these years..." It took some courage to mention the betrayed dream. Others only begged to be comforted: "...when I read about the horrible deeds, I felt terrible... How come these things were allowed to happen in the Soviet Union?"

Surprisingly, the one who spoke openly for those who refused to be protected from despair was Howard Fast. For several months, in his column "The Current Scene," Fast talked around the revelations. But shortly after the publication of Khrushchev's full report he faced them bravely: "There is little one can say to take the deadly edge off the Khrushchev speech... one must face the fact that it itemizes a record of barbarism and

paranoic blood-lust that will be a lasting and shameful memory to man... I for one looked hopefully, but vainly, at the end of the document for a pledge that the last execution had taken place on Soviet soil... Instead I learned that three more executions had been announced... and my stomach turned over with the bloodletting, with the madness of vengeance and counter-vengeance, of suspicion and counter-suspicion." Fast did in fact strive to restore the moral authority of at least his own brand of "socialism." He had failed to understand, he wrote, "that to win socialism and to abandon the holy right of man to his own conscience... is no victory at all ... never again can I accept as a just practice under socialism that which I know to be unjust."

But the happiest thing about Fast's column was that it appears to have been his last. At the time of this writing nothing further of his has appeared in the *Daily Worker*. And it is difficult to see how he can return to the paper. His article described a despair which, if it is honest, must drive him from the CP. The central object of the party's faith has contaminated itself before his eyes. He can hardly expect men like Dennis and Foster to understand his attitude, or to accept it. For they have foresworn the very possibility of moral shock. The pattern of their reactions demonstrated once more, if demonstration were needed, the extreme limits of their cautious obedience.*

* Subsequently, Fast became involved in an interesting exchange with Eugene Lyons in July issues of the *New Leader*. Fast's reply to Lyons's "Open Letter" shows him still painfully caught between the boldness of his *Worker* article and the years of habitual obedience to the party.

II

Early in March, quite soon after the Twentieth Congress concluded, William Z. Foster began a series of articles in the *Daily Worker* explaining to its readers the meaning and history of the "cult of the personality." As the revelations of horror appeared, one after another, he stoically added them to his manuscript, never changing its tone, or hinting that anything was wrong. In the years before his death, it appeared, Stalin had become very mean. Foster did admit that this raised certain problems, and chief among these was the problem of opposition: "What alternative policies to Stalin's were suggested...? What resistance was made in top official circles to Stalin's trend towards... denial of collective leadership?" As well as he knew the answers to his questions—that the very structure of the Communist dictatorship made such suggestions and such opposition entirely impossible—Foster maintained his impenetrable calm. He spoke only in approved phrases—and waited: "These problems can be met solely by a review of Stalin's work and this can be done most authoritatively only by those leaders who have worked closely with him in the top circles of the Communist Party..."

But when the tragedy of Yiddish culture in the Soviet Union was made public in New York by the Communist *Freiheit*, something was needed which—to quote a letter—sounded more like "moral indignation." Eugene Dennis presented what was necessarily a sad substitute: his "Sorrow and Perspectives." He offered his condolences, as it were, "for these outrages, which invoke the most profound horror and indignation." And he offered his piti-

ful explanation: "They were perpetrated by Beria's gang and their predecessors as part of their conscious policy of stirring up national hatreds..." Finally he held the balances and judged: "As for socialist-minded workers, they are obligated to deal with reality as a whole... For the Soviet Union is the country where working people suffered privation, hunger and war" to build socialism. What after all, Dennis clearly implied, is Yiddish culture compared to that achievement?

But "reality as a whole" did not offer sufficient comfort; what was actually required was a touch of pure unreality. This was supplied—and with a vehemence which might have surprised Foster and Dennis—by the more imaginative editors of the *Daily Worker*, who sensed immediately the possibilities of "criticism" and of the doctrine of "national communist parties." Perhaps they remembered also that the last major change in party line had been accompanied by an equally major change in party leadership. During April, May and June, they printed one letter after another attacking Foster and Dennis—most often as "apologists" for the Soviet Union.

The significant thing, of course, was that the new position which Gates, Alan Max, and a few others developed did not differ *substantially* from the dulled reiterations of their party superiors. The "rebellious" CPers resembled nothing so much as the little boy who announced his intention of running away from home, and then could not get very far—because he was not allowed to cross the street. Like Foster and Dennis the editors of the *Worker* never thought of examining Khrushchev's description of Stalin's Russia, nor of questioning his claim

that Russia today is transformed. They did not doubt the guilt of any whom Khrushchev left unredeemed, nor did they wonder, or sorrow, as Fast did, at the latest execution in Azerbaijan. They turned away from the workers of Poznan. Yet they strove everywhere to create the *sense* of difference, of criticism. They “demanded” explanations of the “excesses,” insisted that all those guilty in the Rajk case be brought to trial, could not understand how confessions had been “rigged” in the courtroom, were “strongly dissatisfied” when no official statement on anti-Semitism was forthcoming. They “denounced and protested” all the crimes of the past. They printed letters mocking Khrushchev’s “fearlessness,” and one which called him morally decadent. But they could not make a reality of either intelligence or independence. Like the little boy, they dared not step into the street, though had they heard Khrushchev’s call they might have bounded across easily enough. And that would have meant the end of the CP.

As it was, many readers urged such a dissolution (while an approximately equal number warned against “rightist tendencies”). They suggested the foundation of a new “independent Marxist party,” inclusive presumably of the *Monthly Review* and the *National Guardian* groups. The logic of “independence” might even require more than this: the *Worker* printed letters demanding that the Browderite expulsions be reconsidered, and one hesitant reader thought that the Trotskyites, for all their wickedness, might be within the pale after all. About such matters the editors were silent. But they obviously were thinking in popular front terms again themselves. The

“Black Belt” theory of Negro sovereignty was officially discarded in a column by Abner Berry, which also suggested a new look at integration. And George Murray admitted the mistake of “leaving” the CIO. The most significant revision however, featured in the *Worker* for several weeks, was the announcement by Max Weiss, national director of the CP, that the transition to socialism would be accomplished democratically; there would be no need to suppress even bourgeois parties. When James Allen sought to disagree, the *Worker* specifically disassociated itself from his views. Nor did this happy reprieve exhaust Communist humility. For the privilege of a place “within the people’s movement for a more democratic America” they were willing to repeat many times their confession: “We were wrong, terribly wrong.”

III

For a short time all this must have seemed like more than a game—at least for a few of the participants. A note of actual worry crept into the letters of those who (signing themselves “Undaunted” and “Ever-Undespairing”) pleaded that Marxist-Leninist purity be guarded “as the apple of our eye.” With an assist from Togliatti the new critical attitude became virtually the line of the party. Even Dennis acquiesced in it, though with little spirit. The *Worker* congratulated the “independent” CPs of Italy, France, England and Canada, rejoiced in their fraternal discussion, and in their common outlook.

But in July all this changed. The Kremlin, apparently unhappy about Togliatti, was not accustomed to even the sounds of disagreement. Perhaps

the first sign of this was the choice of Dennis' *Worker* article, "The Khrushchev Speech and the USA," for reprinting in *Pravda*. It had clearly been the weakest of the critical pieces. Then early in July the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union issued its long-awaited answer to the "criticism," and one by one the "national" CPs acknowledged its omniscience. The *Worker* welcomed the statement as the most recent contribution to its "fraternal discussion" and promised an editorial analysis. But no editorial ever appeared, and the casual tone of the welcome soon vanished from the paper. Instead it carried a statement from Foster couched in the only rhetoric he seems to know: "...the resolution of the CPSU goes a long way in explaining... It correctly turns attention... The resolution correctly estimates... It coincides with our estimate... etc." A few weeks later the national committee of the CPUSA confirmed Foster's position: "We believe that the resolution of the CPSU provides a convincing answer to the Big Business enemies of socialism, who claim that the gross mistakes made under Stalin's leadership are inherent in socialism... We... are convinced that the Soviet Union under the leadership of the CPSU is moving ahead to a new period of unprecedented Socialist progress..." The stream of critical letter petered out to an entirely manageable trickle.

The rumors are that three "factions" have appeared in the top leadership of CP: one led by Foster, which tries to follow the Thorez strategy of minimizing the recent changes; one led by Dennis, which follows the Khrushchev line faithfully; one led by the

Worker editors, Gates and Max, which pushes toward a more "independent" line. Since Foster's position is both impossible and obsolete from even the CP point of view, the likelihood is that a compromise will be reached between the second and third groups. Perhaps the *Worker* editors will be given a certain leeway, while Dennis retains control of the party machine. Quickly to reestablish the old atmosphere of unconditional obedience is now impossible; the cleverest strategy will be to allow dissatisfaction to be expressed as a mechanism for rendering it ineffectual. For the CP now faces the gravest crisis in its history, and it may well be to the interests of the larger international political movement it represents that locally it should dissolve itself as an organization.

In the meantime it is essential to notice that, whatever the new line, it will continue to be rooted in the same moral-political values as the line just repudiated. It is not ironic that such obedience turn upon its teacher, it is only traditional.

For the next months, and probably years, the CP will be on good behaviour. But the moral quality of American Communism was clearly revealed in the only letter commenting on Fast's column which the *Worker* printed: "When we read of men convicted as accomplices in the crimes of Khrushchev's report being executed, I say good. And let's hope they don't abolish the death penalty until they get them all. My stomach does not turn over like Howard Fast's..." This ought to be remembered in the coming night of piety.

THE CRISIS IN ITALIAN COMMUNISM

Paolo Vittorelli

ROME.

The interview given by Palmiro Togliatti to *Nuovi Argomenti* (reprinted in the *New York Times*) is the best-known reaction of Italian Communism to the Khrushchev revelations; but it is not necessarily the most important one. The Report presented by Togliatti to the Central Committee of the Italian CP on June 24, 1956 completes and to some extent goes beyond this interview. The open discussion in the CP press, which is supposed to prepare for the 8th National Congress of the Italian party, poses problems that Togliatti had barely touched upon. Meanwhile, Nenni's polemic has aggravated the embarrassment of the Italian Communists, who find themselves flanked by his Socialist Party, a party that is both "left-wing," and formally independent of Moscow.

When Togliatti decided to show some signs of independence in his *Nuovi Argomenti* interview, he was trying to satisfy a rank-and-file movement within his own party and at the same time, to head off Nenni's competition. For once, however, the Communist rank-and-file did not seem disposed to accept skillful dialectical tricks; and Nenni, for his part, was not hampered by any diplomatic connections to Moscow that might keep him from beating out his friend Tog-

liatti. This is why Togliatti in his report to the Central Committee was soon forced to go beyond his formulations in *Nuovi Argomenti*.

First, he criticized the Soviet leaders for having been content to "personalize" the Stalin case, without trying to give it an historical interpretation. In limiting themselves to a condemnation of the "personality cult," the Soviet leaders opened the way to a "revisionism" which not only might cause difficulties for the various national Stalins of the other Communist parties, thereby weakening the ties that bound them to the USSR, but might also entail changes in the Soviet structure of such abruptness and magnitude as to place the foreign Communist parties in the most critical positions. It is almost as if England were suddenly to go Communist and suppress the Crown: the more conservative Dominions would no longer recognize themselves in her.

Secondly, Togliatti revealed his fear that a period of recurrent crises may be opening up in the Soviet Union and that the convulsions produced by these crises may set the whole Communist movement back by several decades. For this reason he feels that the reorganization or realignment of the national Communist parties, which began with the Second World War and led up to the dissolution of the Co-

mintern, ought from now on to be continued without the guardianship of an unstable center. This is the now-famous notion of polycentrism, a number of parallel centers for the international movement.

IT IS TRUE that under pressure from Moscow Togliatti subsequently retreated from his apparently bold criticism, but what matters most at the moment is that through the breach opened by his statements the critics of both the "right" and "left" within the Communist Party found a way for opening an attack on Togliatti's regime. The critics of the "left" demand more democracy in the Party, while those on the "right" demand more democracy in the State, openly calling into question the theory of the violent conquest of power and the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Thus Senator Pietro Secchia, former Deputy Secretary of the Party and leader of its "left" wing, deploras in *Unita*, the party paper, the fact that the Italian Party is controlled by a group "which makes and elaborates the decisions" and then passes them on to a mass of members who are called in only "to approve and apply" whatever has been decided by the leaders. "The Party," he writes, "is not and cannot be a school where one teaches its political line to the militants through pedagogic methods."

Velio Spano, former director of *Unita* and member of Parliament, deals at length with the conformism which dominates the Party and which impels the militants to accept "the positions of the Party without discussing them or feeling the need to understand them." (All quotes from *Unita*.)

A Communist writer, Ruggero Zan-

grandi, defends the "responsible silence" to which he adhered for ten years through Party discipline, which went so far as "accepting an inferior Russian painter (and maintaining, sometimes, in the heat of the polemics, that after all he was not so bad)" or convincing his friends that "the statues of Stalin would not harm anybody and were not even embarrassing."

A militant of the rank-and-file, Armando Sarti, informs us that conformism has also invaded all the discussion held in the section meetings or cell groups, where any vocal criticism must be based on a written memorandum submitted to a preliminary censorship of the leaders, who have a habit of arriving at the end of these meetings with an enormous file of notes under their arms, the thickness of which bears witness to their importance in the Party. They do not concern themselves with following the discussion through its course, but only with controlling the orthodoxy of the result.

Another rank-and-file militant, Marco Bragadin, of the Federal Committee of Lucca, explains that the "double game" to which Togliatti alluded in his Report is necessary, for while the Communists are conducting their "struggle for peace," they know—or knew very well—that "as long as capitalism exists war will be inevitable" and that while they pretend to wish to lead their struggle in a democratic manner they are perfectly aware that "only violence can compel the bourgeoisie to surrender its power."

IF THE "LEFT," the intellectuals, and the rank-and-file are fighting for the re-establishment of some democracy within the Party, the "right," in imi-

tation of Umberto Terracini, former President of the Constituent Assembly, who was thrown out of the Party in 1939 following his criticism of the Nazi-Soviet non-aggression pact, directly takes up the theme of the dictatorship of the proletariat and tries to draw from it all the advantage it can. The Communist deputy Bruno Corbi asserts, for instance, that the plurality of routes to socialism means that "in certain countries and under certain conditions one can avoid revolutionary violence," and that "even the dictatorship of the proletariat is no longer an indispensable goal of the conquest of power."

It is here that Nenni intervenes and asserts that the Communists should have thought earlier about following democratic methods. The Socialists withdrew thirty-six years ago from the Third International precisely for the reasons which today propel the Communists to express some reservations on the subject of Soviet politics.

In a series of articles published in the theoretical review of the Socialist Party, *Mondo Operario*, Nenni has posed some basic problems which are not without embarrassment to Togliatti. The responsibility for the atrocities revealed by the Khrushchev Report falls also on the current Soviet leaders and disqualifies the Soviet regime just as much as it does the single-party system. The Soviet experience raises the question of the dictatorship of the proletariat, which in the USSR became first the dictatorship of a party, then of its leaders, and finally of a mythomaniac. Within the framework of the current perspectives, socialism cannot go forward, in Italy or any other country, except in the direction

of maximum democracy. So writes Nenni, the ally or former ally of Togliatti.

It is still too soon to judge the effects of the crisis provoked by the 20th Congress on the Italian political structure. At the administrative elections of May 27, 1956, before the publication of the Khrushchev Report, there occurred a certain turn in the workers' votes from the Communists to the Socialists. But it is still difficult to foresee whether the Communists are in a position to block this decline.

Meanwhile, one can affirm that from now on, on the ideological plane, the Socialist Party will tend to detach itself from the Communist party and to look for an entente, if not a unification, with those Socialists who left the party as followers of Saragat in 1947, because they objected to its unity of action pact with the Communists.

At which point will the Italian Communist party cut short its pursuit of revisions demanded by its rank-and-file and by a good number of its leaders? Will it, at its 8th Congress, end by checking its crisis through "democratic" reforms of the Party statutes, as seems to be the desire of Togliatti? Or will it instead have to accept the task of sliding on the dangerous terrain of "ideological revision", if only to bar this road against Nenni? Obviously, the statements from Italian Communist leaders and militants that I have quoted are important not so much in their own right—for they are "ideological reflections" created by fiat—but as symptoms of the deep crisis that is coursing through the Communist world.

August 5, 1956

AMERICAN NOTEBOOK

Some Brief Comments
On the Domestic Scene

The Haunted Hall: I.W.W. at Fifty

Dan Wakefield

You don't remember the Wobblies. You were too young. Or else not even born yet. There has never been anything like them, before or since. They called themselves materialist-economists but what they really were was a religion. They were workstiffs and bindlebums like you and me, but they were welded together by a vision we don't possess.

—From Here to Eternity by JAMES JONES

Bob Willock is a man in an empty room whose windows provide slanting glimpses of Wall Street towers, to the east, and the waterfront, to the west. It is the meeting hall of the Manhattan branch of the Industrial Workers of the World—"the Wobblies"—an organization sustained by a vision that refuses to die in the face of all facts and funeral rites. The IWW is fifty years old now and largely forgotten, but the vision that made it the greatest radical movement in American labor still holds men like Bob Willock, who stared at it once, to the several scattered halls across the country that are so full of memories and empty of men.

The memories are many—riding the rails to Spokane to support fellow workers in the free speech fights of the west, following the harvest with the dreams of better wages and the songs of Joe Hill, striking and picket-

ing the textile mills at Lawrence, Mass., when Joe Ettor raised his voice above the jailings and killings to tell the employers that "You can't weave cloth with bayonets."

The men are few—but the miracle is that there are any left at all. What sort of men in our practical times have the heart to stay loyal to a vision the world all around them laughs off as obsolete?

BOB WILLOCK went to sea out of Galveston in 1925 on the old Savannah line (like most of the stuff of his past, it is gone now) and by the time he docked in Boston a fellow on board had persuaded him to take out a Wobbly book. He didn't think much about it at the time but two years later he was trying to ship from the gulf again and a fellow from the International Seamen's Union tried to shake him down for extra dough to get an

ISU book. Bob wouldn't pay and went around to the Wobbly hall. They got him a ship on condition he'd strike with the other Wobbly crewmen against the line's plan for cutting the deckhands and lengthening the watch, and he did, and the ship sailed with full crew and customary hours and Bob has been a Wobbly ever since. For the last six years he has alternated between the sea and the job of secretary of the IWW Marine Transport Workers Union, No. 510, Manhattan Branch.

It occupies a fading lime-colored room above a Chinese laundry on Broad Street, and by the rules and traditions of the IWW, Bob Willock can't get paid more to run it than the average wage of the workers who belong. At the back of the hall a partition creates his home and office, which consists of a hotplate, a folding bed, a large cluttered desk, and a bookcase. The Wobblies still read—just as they did in the early days when IWW migratory workers took their books from harvest to harvest in the west—and they talk, and remember. That is almost all they have left, and that is primarily what Bob Willock's job is. He keeps a pot of coffee on and passes the time with the few who walk in from the past, like the "fellow who used to be a cellmate of Big Bill Haywood at Leavenworth, drops by just about every Sunday, just to talk."

"We really aren't doing any organizing now," Bob told a visitor not long ago. "The fellows who still belong, it's mostly an ideal with them. You can't keep paying dues in two unions, and the one that gets you a job is the one you take."

THE CAUSE lost most of its remaining

missionaries in 1949 when the U.S. government administered the most recent of the many deathblows that the IWW has absorbed. It was placed on the Attorney-General's list of subversive organizations because its membership, estimated at 1400 at the time, was feared as a group that "... seeks to alter the form of government of the United States by unconstitutional means." W. H. Westman, the IWW General Secretary-Treasurer, wrote to Tom Clark to ask for a reversal of the ruling, or at least an explanation of it, but was granted neither, and the ailing Wobbly treasury was too weak to do battle with the government it threatened by carrying the matter into court.

Big Bill Haywood had tried to explain back in 1918 at the trial of the 101 Wobbly leaders indicted for subversive activities that the Wobbly dream was not political at all; that it didn't seek to change the form of government, but the form of economy; that its aim was to organize industrially to "form the structure of the new society within the shell of the old."

Those leaders were left to form the new society within the jails of the old, and when Warren Harding granted a commutation of sentence four years later, the leaders came out with their vision clouded, and the IWW was never quite the same. Haywood said to Ralph Chaplin once that "The hands of our people are calloused and scarred from trying to make a dream come true," and after four years at Cook County Jail and Leavenworth, the hearts were scarred too. Haywood and George Andreychine went to Russia, and the loss was the deepest the IWW had to bear.

The Wobblies had lost their leaders

before, but this was a different kind of loss. It was one thing to lose Frank Little to a lynching mob when he tried to organize the miners in Butte, Montana; and to lose Joe Hill to a firing squad in Salt Lake City and be able to tell the world his last words were "Don't mourn for me—organize!" It was quite another thing to lose Haywood and Andreytchine to a foreign land.

There were others, later, who didn't go physically to Russia but moved spiritually to the Communist Party, and the Party's activities in the U.S. after the first world war were one of the vital drains on the health of the IWW. It was one of the deepest blows of all, in the way that Haywood's exile was, to see old Wobbly leaders exchange the grass-roots American radicalism of the IWW for the Soviet-grown dream of the party. In 1923 the IWW paper *Industrial Solidarity* called across the ideological miles to its former Fellow Worker William Z. Foster with a kind of brotherly message to a black sheep who'd strayed away from home for good:

Willie, you may print a ton of *Labor Heralds* each month in the year, and fill them from cover to cover with robber, thief, highjack. You may shout reactionary, yellow, to the top of your breath, but after it is all over, the IWW will still be the IWW that it was when you were third cook in that lumber-camp in the Northwest.

Elizabeth Gurley Flynn went, too, and Earl Browder, and many others. Those that remained were often bruised and bullied by the Communists who stole so much of their thunder and used it against them. Ralph Chaplin, the IWW poet and editor, was speaking for the Wobblies at a soap-box meeting in Chicago in the Thir-

ties when a Communist youth group tried to lead his crowd away. They called him a reactionary and finally drowned out his voice by singing "Solidarity Forever"—the song he had written years before for the IWW.

Assignment to the subversive list was a particularly unpleasant irony for the Wobblies, who had fought the Communists right down the line, and were battered by them as they were battered by employers, and the ranks of Respectability. The MTWU of the IWW had fought them on the waterfront throughout the thirties when not many others were fighting them; and for their efforts the Wobblies now bear a "subversive" brand, and that is one more factor in their loneliness. Their old friends on the waterfront must now risk a taint by even coming to see them, and Manhattan Branch 510 hasn't had enough men to hold a meeting in a year.

"It used to be we had to have fifteen men for a quorum," Bob Willock told his visitor. "This union's mostly transient, though, you know. We changed it to seven a few years back, but there hasn't been that many to hold a meeting with for well, I guess about a year now."

The afternoon the visitor came to ask questions, there were only two men, besides Bob. "Not too many years ago," he said, "this hall was so crowded you couldn't get inside the door at this time of night. The old fellows used to drop by for old times sake, even though they didn't belong anymore. But then, a few years back, the other unions moved their halls uptown, and it was too far to come."

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THERE is a tall, straight lighthouse with bold initials "IWW" and two white beams shining out from its tow-

er. Churning against it from every side are tidal waves pouring from a dark region labeled "Reaction" and written in the waves are the symbols "CIO," "AFL," "NLRB," a swastika, and a hammer-and-sickle.

The scene appears in a three-column, page one cartoon of *The Industrial Worker*, official fortnightly newspaper of the IWW. Unread copies, stacked in piles according to dates, clutter a table in the corner of the Manhattan Wobbly hall.

The visitor picked up an issue from the pile at the front, unfurled the four pages to their flag-like width, and noticed two large portraits. One was of Wesley Everest (killed by a mob in a raid on his union hall at Centralia, Wash., Nov. 11, 1919); the other was of Joe Hill (shot by a firing squad in Salt Lake City for a disputed murder case after organizing a strike nearby, Nov. 19, 1915). On the first page of the paper is a black-bordered list of 18 IWW members killed while serving the union on various dates of past Novembers, and the heading is "In November We Remember." The most recent date is 1927.

The dates, the pictures, the old-style seven-column makeup, the poetry, bear that unmistakable flavor of the past that is a part of all yellowing papers. But the pages are neither yellowing nor flaking—they are white, and the date of the issue is November 14, 1955.

IT IS TYPICAL of current issues of the paper, anchored so deeply in days gone by. The stories that aren't reprints from other publications usually reach toward the glories of the past, often with an uneasy sense that they might be lost in the vast indifference of the present. The lead story of the

issue of September 19, 1955 is topped by a triple-deck head that reads "REMEMBER THE GREAT UNNAMED WHO LABORED IN OBSCURITY FOR HUMAN ADVANCEMENT."

The paper depends by tradition and financial necessity on contributions from fellow workers, reporting conditions "at the point of production." The reports now are few because the fellow workers are few, but there are still scattered words in the fiery traditions of the past, like the message beneath the bold "Organize Idaho" head on the front page of the October 31, 1955 issue. It is a summary straight from the point of production describing the state of disorganization among the Idaho lumbermen, and it is signed by "Idaho Jack."

But we know, unhappily, that no one today is named "Idaho Jack"—and we have to surmise that this faithful fellow worker is one who knew the west in the days when "Wobbly" was a dangerous and glorious word, and action by the IWW was bringing shorter hours, livable housing facilities, and enough clean bedding to eliminate the "bindle stiff" from the woods. The bindle stiff had to roll his blankets in a bundle and hoist it on his back for the long hard journeys from camp to camp, but even with dirty bedding his plight was more romantic, if more difficult, than that of the lumbermen Idaho Jack sees working today.

The new woodsmen drive their cars to the mountains and sleep overnight in the back seat, cooking their meals close by. It takes some of them four hours to drive to the woods but they don't want to batch it or camp anymore, and the eyes of Idaho Jack must be sore for the sight of a bindle stiff.

Their counterparts of the water-

front are the men Bob Willock found when he went to sea the last time. "They're in debt with cars and television sets," he said. "They sat around after mess according to who had what kind of cars—the Fords in one corner, the Pontiacs over here, maybe a fellow with a Mercury talking to a fellow with a Dodge. All of 'em telling about what they get to the gallon."

To ask why the IWW is almost dead is perhaps to ask where the "old worker," the generic type "Wobbly" has gone—for his disappearance, more than all the deadly events that befell the organization, lies at the root of the IWW's obsolescence in 1955. While Walter Reuther negotiated for the Guaranteed Annual Wage with Ford in the Spring of '54, the auto workers hoped their leaders would let them off picket duty so they could get in some fishing and ball games. They stood outside the plant with their portable radios, listening to the latest rock-and-roll music; and the Wobblies who carried the picket signs in spite of bullets and tar and feathers at Lawrence and Paterson, McKees Rock and Butte, Bingham Canyon and Everett, became official ghosts of history.

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BOB WILLOCK wasn't able to get to the fiftieth anniversary convention of the IWW held last year in Chicago, and the Manhattan seamen's branch was represented by "a fellow who used to be here with us who's out in the west now." The fellow was one of sixteen delegates who met in the IWW national headquarters hall at 2422 Halstead Street.

The talk was mainly memories, some of them stretching back to 1905 when 203 delegates met for the first IWW convention, and listened to Big Bill

Haywood open the proceedings. The Marxist sense of history was heavily upon him, and he told the assembled delegates that this was "The Continental Congress of the Working Class."

The words were proud and conceivably true, for when Haywood looked from the speaker's stand out across the faces of several hundred delegates he knew they represented more than 100,000 workers. His dream was big and that moment it was bright and untroubled by the blood-dimmed future of the organization that would find itself huddled in an almost empty room in Chicago fifty years later with sixteen delegates representing something like 600 men from nine branches across the country.

The Industrial Worker still pushes for recruitment, and many of its loyal readers try—though there seems to be only frustration for the effort, whether the prospective recruits be young men or old. C. D. Van Nostrand has tried the young, and he wrote from Des Moines that "I have talked to workers of the plant about lining up with the IWW but it was like talking to little boys who could not understand what I was talking about."

Bob Willock has tried the old, and he says it's like this:

"I see 'em around the waterfront and they come up and slap me on the back and say 'Hey, Bob, how's about having a drink? Listen Bob, how much do I owe on my dues? I been meaning to come up and pay back the dues I owe. How much do I owe now?'"

"I ask em how long it's been since they paid and they say 'I dunno, Bob, it's been a good while. Don't you have the records up there at the hall?'"

"Some," I say. "And they say 'Well,

listen, Bob, I'll be up to settle with you, see? I'll be up real soon.' And then they find somebody else to have a drink with and that's the end of it."

The world has moved up the street

but Bob Willock stays fast to his drafty hall, like his fellow survivors in the outposts remaining. As long as they live, the IWW will live, and when they die, the IWW will die.

The Politics of Psychological Testing

John Bennet

In September 1954 *Fortune* magazine ran an article severely criticizing the use of psychological "personality tests" on business executives. It was not simply a run-of-the-mill attack upon science as science, or even upon pseudo-science as science. Instead, it was relatively temperate, and at times even penetrating in its analysis. But a small furor resulted because the article had the temerity to raise questions about the ethical propriety of personality testing, as well as about its validity and usefulness.

Of course, as long as psychological testing was restricted to workers and job applicants, *Fortune* had seen no cause for alarm. It was the extension of these tests to executives themselves which appeared disturbing. So disturbing, in fact, that a full-page treatment was reserved for a section entitled "How to Cheat on the Tests." And there, for all executives to see, were a large number of the "correct answers" which clinical psychologists have jealously guarded for many years. It may not have been ethical, but apparently *Fortune* assumed that fire had to be fought with fire.

THE USE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL TESTS for manpower control found its earliest opportunities in the selection of military personnel. Screening procedures

were employed to weed out the psychological undesirables—those unfit to be soldiers. It was consequently observed that success in selecting men for their ability to endure military hardships might foreshadow similar success in selecting those most likely to endure on the economic front. Since then the practice of testing employees and job applicants has become an important business. Personnel departments now rely largely upon psychological instruments. But even more important has been the mushrooming of private testing organizations representing themselves as psychological "institutes." These agencies offer prompt mail-order service: a four- or five-page report is returned within forty-eight hours after receipt of the tests.

In addition to the relatively reliable and valid tests for *aptitude* and *interest*, it is now largely standard practice to give job applicants questionnaires which purport to be tests of *personality*. These questionnaires are far easier to administer than are the more costly but more reliable methods of personality diagnosis used by reputable clinical psychologists. That the use of such questionnaires is widespread can be gathered from the fact that the 1953 sales of the Bernreuter Personality Inventory alone, by one

of several distributors, was reported to be one million copies.

The personality questions relate—or are interpreted as relating—to a man's marital adjustment, the orthodoxy of his political beliefs, his willingness to take orders without inward resentment, his ambitiousness, and so forth. As a matter of fact, there are few areas of a person's life about which the test analyst (he need not be a bona fide psychologist) cannot make some inference, however far-fetched.

On the other hand, it is not infrequent that extremely personal remarks made by the job applicant, who assumes that the tests are confidential, are divulged and elaborated on to the prospective employer. Certainly, the practice of offering psychological analyses to persons not qualified to understand and use them raises some delicate questions of professional ethics.

At present, private testing organizations are being used not only by thousands of medium-sized firms, but by a great many large corporations which already have their own personnel departments. DuPont, American Chain and Cable, U.S. Rubber, International Paper, and National Cash Register are customers of commercially-managed testing services.

Specific information about these psychological "institutes" is hard to come by. The American Psychological Association has vaguely and piously condemned them—without naming names; but no specific action against them has been taken. Since they are largely staffed by college-trained psychologists, criticism from the profession has been respectful and discreet—the commercialization of industrial psychology seems to be largely taken for granted. More specific books on

the subject, such as Eysenck's *Uses and Abuses of Psychology* fail to come to grips with the problem, because they fail to see the malfunctioning in its social context, and limit their criticism to errors in clinical or experimental method. As a result, personal experience becomes a prerequisite for understanding what is actually going on in the field of industrial psychology today, and it is out of such experience that this account has been written.

ARE SUCH "INSTITUTES" REPUTABLE? That depends upon one's point of view. From the standpoint of the present-day business world, they are considered eminently respectable. From the point of view of a good many clinical psychologists, they are necessary evils—unfortunate but ineradicable. Judged by either moral or scientific criteria, they appear to function for ends which are insufficiently humane, and by means which are insufficiently scientific.

As it is presently carried on, mass psychological testing destroys the personal relationship which has traditionally existed between the medical practitioner and his patient. The psychologist no longer confronts the subject. No longer can there be explorations of leading clues stumbled upon by happy accident in the direct interview, or in the course of face-to-face projective testing.

Instead, the psychologist feels no personal bond between himself and the subject. There is not even a cash payment involved. The report is the property of the prospective employer. The person being tested never sees the interpretations that have been placed upon his responses, nor is he usually informed about the results. He has no recourse, no appeal, for he is not even aware of the "charges"

that have been made against him. However, if he is so fortunate as to be informed, for example, that he is reported to be "stubborn" and "uncooperative," his protests may only appear to the employer as confirmation of the test analysis.

The psychologist who writes the report does not feel concerned about this. His responsibility, as he sees it, is to his own employer, the "psychological institute," and to the client company which is paying for the report.

In addition to being deprived of the direct interview, the test analyst also refuses to consider background information which might "contaminate" the scientific objectivity of his report. No account is taken of the subject's socio-economic status, his education, race or religion, his national or regional origin, his previous work-history, or any other information which might shed light on him as an individual, and provide a meaningful frame of reference for analyzing his responses. Then, since the test applicant's distinguishing characteristics are *a priori* eliminated, it is not considered necessary to use differential norms. Instead, uniform, undifferentiated norms are used for all individuals. Frequently these norms are so antiquated as to be based upon the general population of the 1920s rather than of the 1950s.

The psychologist thus retreats behind a facade of symbols, such as test scores and percentile ratings, and becomes an expert on the classification of these symbol-patterns into "dependent" or "independent," "sociable" or "unsociable," "dominant" or "submissive." After he has analyzed a few thousand such tests, without ever seeing the living beings whom he is supposed to be analyzing, the psy-

chologist begins to lose any intimation he ever had that such beings do exist. Magically, the percentile rating becomes reality, while the job applicant becomes a mythical creature, a shadow. And toward shadows one feels no guilt.

True, if the psychologist were a mere statistician, there might be little to criticize in this attitude. But he instead pretends to be a diagnostician, capable of reliable judgment about individual personalities. It is this pretentious misuse of science, skilfully disguised by high-powered sales techniques, which leads one to describe much of present-day industrial testing by commercial "institutes" as charlatanism.

THE PROFIT BASIS UPON WHICH such institutes operate requires increasing rationalization of the techniques for mass-producing test reports. Individualized interpretations, attention to unique characteristics of a test pattern, would disrupt the speed of production. Efficiency is therefore obtained by standardizing interpretations. Given a particular "yes" or "no" response, or a particular percentile rating, the test analyst simply enters into the report a prearranged standard paragraph.

By means of these efficient techniques, it has become possible to eliminate psychologists as test analysts, substituting for them code clerks who can automatically fit each test score or response with its corresponding standardized interpretation.

As professionally trained personnel are thereupon eliminated, or are reduced to bureaucratic impotence, the standardized interpretations come to be dictated, not by careful inference from the empirical material in the tests, but by the business management

of the psychological "institute." The function of such management is to obtain the maximum of sales with the minimum loss to professional respectability. This problem is frequently solved by giving the clients what they want to hear, while investing the report with an air of gravity and decorum. The interpretations are often tailored by management with an eye to their salability. Clients wish to know whether a man will be a loyal company employee? Good—interpret a high accuracy score on the mental ability test as "loyalty." They want to know whether a man lacks money incentive? See if he admits to being unsystematic in caring for his personal property. If so, suggest that he might be more readily compensated by rewards in the form of prestige, than by rewards in the form of salary increases.

Faced with a test such as the Bernreuter Inventory, which places a high premium upon conventional behavior, the individual must turn out to be either conformist or non-conformist. But the penalty for not conforming to the psychological pattern deemed desirable for assimilation into industry is that one may be refused work. Similarly, refusal to answer questions is seen as tantamount to an admission of unfitness. Eventually, a person may find it virtually impossible to obtain a job without taking personality tests. In that event, his refusal to answer personal questions, or his answering them in an unconventional way, would be equivalent to exile from the community of respectable workers, and deprivation of the means of subsistence.

The alternative is simulated con-

formity, feigned assent. More and more, a person must protect what he feels to be his essential self through devious behavior and stratagems. The process of dissembling and fencing has become rationalized, for the personality questionnaire such as the Bernreuter provides a specific measure, not of the individual's actual personality, but of his ability to feign.

Yet dissimulation must eventually have its effects upon the person who practices it. On the one hand, it can lead him to adopt as his own true personality the mask of conventionality which has been impressed upon him as being desirable. One is then led to conform so faithfully to the standardized personality-image ("extraverted," "stable," "aggressive," "sociable," "loyal," etc.) as to lose contact with any more fundamental system of personal or social values.

On the other hand, such dissimulation can drive the individual deeper within himself, widening the gap between himself and his mask of conventionality. But as the tension caused by this gap increases, so does the danger of an eventual breakdown in the overall personality structure.

One central characteristic of our time is that the struggle for existence is being gradually removed from the physical sphere to the psychological. Once again survival is taken as proof of fitness, but now it is psychological survival that is at stake. Another way of putting this would be to say that the 19th century was chiefly characterized by the denial to the masses of the means of physical subsistence, while the 20th century characteristically denies the conditions of psychological integrity.

BOOKS

Populism as Bogey-Man

THE TORMENT OF SECRECY, by Edward A. Shils. Free Press, Glencoe, Ill. \$3.50.

Edward A. Shils, a prominent sociologist who teaches at the University of Chicago, has written a skillful and provocative book which investigates "the background and consequences of American security policies."

According to Shils, these policies result from the populist tradition in American politics. Because it denies the "autonomy of institutions" and automatically "identifies the will of the people with justice and morality," populism ignores the legitimate boundaries between the public and the private, thus subverting the foundations of a "pluralist society." The populist tradition has scant respect for the rights of privacy because it is obsessed by privacy's idiot twin, secrecy. Privacy is the voluntary withholding of information about "one's own business" supported by an indifference of others to this information. This indifference implies a willingness to accept wide diversities in thought and behavior. But when there is a denial of the legitimacy of diversity; when a need is felt for social uniformity because diversity in thought and behavior creates anxiety by lending support to suppressed impulses—then an obsession with secrecy begins to influence political behavior. At this point

the private is perceived as something secret and hidden, and, therefore, dangerous—something which must be swept out into the open for inspection by all. Conversely, since the world is a dangerous place, whatever resources one's *own* group possesses must be jealously guarded.

This clearly pathological obsession with secrecy finds political expression through populism. Shils skillfully demonstrates how this tradition functions and culminates in such atrocities as McCarthyism and the loyalty-security program. The average Congressman, caught in the cross pressures of conflicting group interests and with an ambiguous social status because he is a "politician," lives in fear and anxiety. Therefore, when in his committee work he deals with bureaucrats, who are often more knowledgeable and competent than he is, the ground is prepared for a frustration and resentment released in investigations and general harassment of the bureaucrats. These investigations, pricked on as they are by resentment, end in attempts by the legislature to usurp the functions of administration.

Similar resentments occur when the legislator is confronted by scientists and intellectuals. The populist suspi-

cion of "overeducation" combined with the belief that all intellectuals are Communist or New Dealers—terms synonymous in the current lexicon of politics—make the intellectuals fair game. Scientists, of course, are by definition crazy, living in a world far beyond the ken of the average Congressman, yet occupying a power position which the legislator must acknowledge. The resentment this situation causes culminates in a loyalty program which, in turn, culminates in an Oppenheimer Case.

Shils is equally worth reading when he surveys the consequences of the breakdown of privacy and the politicizing of all spheres of life. He is valuable because he is critically aware that the loyalty program has little to do with realistic threats to the nation's security. The significance of the policies lies in the fact that they attempt to enforce a single standard of loyalty as the only standard, and undermine the basis for multiple and conditional loyalties.

YET SHILS' WORK suffers from a major flaw which is as symptomatic of our age as the phenomena he examines. It is no accident that in a time when labeling oneself a "conservative" is a sign of grace Shils chooses to concentrate on the evils of populism. Nor is it merely fortuitous that the yardstick he uses to measure the decline of privacy in this country is Great Britain, a "bulwark of privacy" founded on a comparatively rigid class structure, "an acceptance of hierarchy," and the "feelings of affinity which members of the elite" have for one another. Nor, again, is it wholly coincidental that Shils' picture of the good society is the "liberal society" in which "the economy is not run by

the government and government is not run by the owners and managers of the economy"; a society in which the elites of all institutional spheres respect each other and are "bound together not only by law and interest, but by a permeative sense of affinity."

Shils' use of Great Britain as a standard and his concern with the solidarity of the elites point up the significance of his emphasis on populism. This is not to deny that there is an American political tradition which "proclaims that the will of the people as such is supreme over every other standard," and that such a tradition fed by hyperpatriotism, xenophobia, and fundamentalism has resulted in the worst kinds of anti-democratic action and thought. But, as Shils himself notes, "populism has many faces."

...it exists wherever there is an ideology of popular resentment against the order imposed on society by a long-established, differentiated ruling class, which is believed to have a monopoly of power, property, breeding and culture... Populism is tinged by the belief that the people are not just the equal of their rulers; they are actually better than their rulers and better than the classes—the urban middle classes—associated with the ruling powers.

This is an invidious way of stating that populism represents a movement and a protest—if somewhat inchoate—by those close to the bottom of the class structure who do not accept or are forced into conflict with a social order which keeps them near the bottom. Lumping *this* face of populism with its anti-democratic face obscures the problem of why this conflict is channeled into anti-democratic patterns, and defends the status quo by making populism *nothing* but Know-nothingism or McCarthyism.

Some of the factors involved are mentioned by Shils in connection with hyperpatriotism but are not applied to the problem of populism. Two manifestations of the latter are a denial of "the autonomy of institutions" and a hostility to intellectuals and education generally. Where there is "institutional autonomy" there will be groups with different value systems and patterns of behavior. This means that one's own values and behavior are constantly challenged by the presence of alternatives; that is, an element of uncertainty or ambiguity is introduced in regard to one's beliefs. Intellectual work functions toward the same end. The intellectual, whether he is a scientist, artist, or philosopher, serves to make the world problematic; he is an agent of ambiguity. To live in a society in which intellectual freedom and different cultural patterns are seen as legitimate requires a high degree of tolerance of ambiguity.

THIS RAISES two questions. First, what are the sources for a high tolerance of ambiguity? If personality factors are ignored, one of the sources is found in the degree of social cohesion, the degree to which there are strong bonds between individuals which serve as means of social support. Second, what are the chances for cohesive groups to form in American society? Shils tells us that the tradition of hyperpatriotism indicates a "general looseness of ties which bind people to localities and corporate bodies." A quick glance at American history shows that this is to be anticipated; the continual westward movement of the frontier indicates the absence of tightly knit communities. And as Richard Hofstadter has point-

ed out in *The Age of Reform*, the American farm community never had the "communal" character of European peasant villages. Moreover, Hofstadter informs us, the farmer constantly sought to sell his land at a profit and move on.

In addition to this geographic mobility there has been the relatively high rate of social mobility. In a recent study of social mobility W. Lloyd Warner characterizes the process as constant "arrival and departure," and finds that the most mobile individuals are those who do not permit themselves to form close attachments to individuals or groups. To become too tightly bound in a web of social relationships injures one's chances of emulating the Horatio Alger hero. Finally we can point to urbanization with its well known concomitants of segmental living and social isolation.

Given these facts of American history, the rise of the anti-democratic components of populism becomes more intelligible. Deprived of the sources of social support which allow one to bear the uncertainties of life in a democratic society, groups under excessive strain fall prey to an anxiety most easily alleviated by a devil or conspiracy theory of history. They support ideologies which demand total homogeneity and single standards of conduct and thought to which all must be made to conform.

Unless we understand these social and historical conditions which are the roots of the anti-democratic face of populism we are forced into thinking that these anti-democratic patterns are inevitable and indigeneous to democracy. After all, it was De Tocqueville writing a hundred years before the current hue and cry about pop-

ulism who pointed out the American propensity for strict conformity, and who identified it as an inherent evil of democracy. Unless we are aware that it is not inherent but something with *determinate historical and social antecedents* we are left with no alternative than the one adopted by Shils and by Talcott Parsons in a recent essay. That is, we must try to main-

tain "equilibrium" and "stability" by supporting elite rule and strengthen the values which encourage "deference to hierarchy." To put it more bluntly, we are left with the position that only a limited degree of democracy is possible, which means to maintain a social system in which broad inequalities are institutionalized and defended.

MURRAY HAUSKNECHT

Viewing a World in Conflict

A WORLD IN REVOLUTION, by Sidney Lens. Frederick A. Praeger, New York, 1956. 250 pp., \$3.75.

It is Sidney Lens's contention that not two but three socio-economic systems confront each other in the world today. They are communism, capitalism and feudalism. The first is present in Russia, its satellites and China; the second in the U.S., England, Germany, Japan and, to a lesser degree, Italy and France. The last prevails throughout the greater part of the globe—its existence gives the lie to all facile references to a "free world." For, while "feudalism" is not totalitarian in form, it plays a profoundly reactionary role and, unless eliminated by internal and external democratic forces, it will give way to Communism.

By repeated emphasis on the term "feudalism" as denoting the system of large landholdings prevalent in most of Asia and South America, and on "capitalism" as the highly resilient social structure of Western countries, Lens seeks sharply to delineate the essential irreconcilability of the two. The problem of the underdeveloped countries, he says, is not one of poverty, i.e., it is not primarily economic,

but social and political. Under feudalism, capital accumulation is hindered since surplus funds flow into luxury consumption. A legal code lacking guarantees against arbitrary state action is preserved, hence private investment is without the juridical protection it needs in order to function. The resultant economic stagnation has been and is creating problems to which feudalism offers no answers but which the peoples are impatient to solve. These problems—we are still following Lens—are analogous to those faced by the West 100-200 years ago; except that here the industrial revolution provided employment for the displaced peasants forced off the land by the spread of commercial farming—for there were no serious obstacles to capital accumulation. This is not the case in feudal countries today. What capital accumulation there is proceeds too slowly. Furthermore, the situation in these "backward" countries is aggravated by the coalition of native feudal lords with Western imperialists. This coalition, by effectively

preventing the rise of a native bourgeoisie, may have been in the short-run interest of Western capitalism. But in the long run it undermined capitalism itself by preventing the expansion of the world market.

The area of a freely functioning capitalism, i.e., the area in which the problems of industrialization have been solved, is still quite small; the inhibitory effects of feudalism upon economic development extend from France—where productivity gains are stifled by measures which prevent the elimination of the many marginal producers—to Austria, Iran, South America and India where the state is not energetic enough to undertake radical land reform. Lens adduces numerous specific examples, set into a briefly sketched historical background, to demonstrate the insidious effects and the terrible sharpening of social contradictions to which they give rise.

THE SECOND PART of the book deals with the "how" of the economic development of backward countries. Lens reduces the answer to this question to variations in the tempo of capital accumulation. Three tempos—slow, optimum and rapid—are conceived by him, each relating to a specific social structure. Feudalism is identified with the first, while totalitarian regimes characterize the third. The optimum rate of capital accumulation is to Lens a social and political rather than a narrowly economic question. It is determined with a high degree of government responsiveness to the needs and desires of the people.

The final part of Lens's book is devoted to a discussion of policies open to the U.S. The military approach which today characterizes

American foreign policy, argues Lens, is self-defeating. The upheavals in Asia, Africa and South America arise from social problems of which the Russians through their Communist agents may take advantage but which they do not create. America can contribute to solving them, but mere financial and technical aid cannot change anything and may strengthen existing reactionary governments—such as is the case already in Spain, Iran, Guatemala, etc. Rather, conditions should be attached to aid in order to help the repressed democratic forces in the countries concerned. This would, to be sure, constitute "intervention" in the affairs of other peoples but such intervention is already practiced by the U.S. in more or less covert form. Only by America's active support of impending or actual revolutions can the Soviet Union be checked.

INTO A BOOK of 250 pages Lens has compressed a discussion of virtually all the problems which have arisen on the social, political and economic plane in the past 50 years (only those central to his basic thesis have been summarized above). Perhaps it is this which accounts for much oversimplification and schematization. The reader is left without an adequate appreciation of the profoundly problematical character of the issues discussed. Lens's very terminology is open to question. The concept of "capitalism," for example, should not have been used in a book of this kind as if it were not itself subject to reevaluation, particularly at a time when its distinction from other growing economic systems has become fluid and when its relationship to "socialism"—also a concept

in a state of redefinition—cannot be thought of simply in 19th century terms. Lens's wide use of "feudalism" also obscures more than it clarifies. It introduces historical associations of doubtful relevancy; it tends to exaggerate the opposition of interest between landlordism and capitalism and to slur over the fact that the "feudal" landlords are involved in the network of the world market. Its application to countries like France, Italy, Turkey, etc., though qualified, blinds the reader to the existence of an altogether autonomous set of problems typical of *national* development.

Aside from objections one may register to Lens's terminology—and such objections, it should be clear, are not just semantic quibbling—his rather too simplified treatment of a number of key issues may be questioned. He takes for granted that heavy and rapid investments in capital goods are a prerequisite for a high standard of living. Historical experience would seem to bear this out; yet if countries like India or Indonesia were to attempt to base themselves on such experience, the results would probably be as catastrophic as they have been in Russia. There is a good deal of discussion in Asia centering around this problem, that is, whether economic development is to be labor-intensive rather than concentrate on capital (see the articles by Asoka Meh-ta in *DISSENT*, Spring and Summer 1955). Since the nature and tasks of economic development form one of the chief subjects of Lens's book, it is unfortunate that he ignores a discussion of such central importance.

Another basic question discussed by Lens is that of democracy in the underdeveloped countries, and the forces

sustaining it. He does not doubt that such forces exist everywhere in these countries and that they can without great difficulty be raised to a level of maturity by means of selective American aid. He does not attempt to analyze these forces and only rarely identifies them (Naguib, Mossadegh, U Nu). He implicitly accepts the frequent comparison of the present state of the countries in question with that of the U.S. in 1776. Such a comparison, however, ignores decisive peculiarities which held only for the American revolution. The countries with which Lens is concerned do not have the social strata whose very existence is staked on the type of representative institutions which have evolved in Western Europe and the U.S. They have no bourgeoisie, no industrial hierarchy of weight, their traditional institutions are in a state of dissolution, their political and economic objectives are unclarified and in dispute. These factors account to some extent for the difficulties faced by the U.S. in formulating its policies towards these countries, just as the pres-

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ence in Europe of an industrialism based on a fairly viable bourgeois state made possible the policies embodied in the Marshall Plan.

Lens's book provides a welcome contrast to the usual "human interest" reportage as well as to the specialist's work on backward economies. However, Lens tends to formulate ready

answers to questions which, in the light of the experiences of the past decades, are open or should be re-opened. It is a running discourse on "what to think on current problems," not a search for the measure of these problems. This is what makes reading it a somewhat frustrating experience.

HORST BRAND

Marx as Sociologist

KARL MARX, *SELECTED WRITINGS IN SOCIOLOGY AND SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY*, edited with an introduction and notes by T. B. Bottomore and Maximilien Rubel. Watts & Co. London, 1956. 268 pp. 21 s.

This book is required reading for all DISSENT readers. Radicals needn't be Marxists, but they should know Marx.

American students of Marx have long been hampered by the fact that some of his most important writings, especially the earlier ones, are not available in English. This accounts in part for the seriously deficient interpretations of his work which one encounters not only among his adversaries, but also among the professed defenders of Marx. The complex and many-faceted structure of Marx's thought can be fully understood only if the manuscripts prior to the *Communist Manifesto* are taken into consideration, and it is these, precisely, which in their majority have not yet been translated.

The present volume contains enough selections from earlier and later works to permit at least an overview of the whole of Marxist thought, from the early *Introduction to the Critique of the Hegelian Philosophy of Law*

(1844) to the late proposal for an empirical study of working class conditions (1880).

The editors have organized the material in topical rather than chronological order, devoting special sections to such topics as: the materialist conception of history; the theory of existence and consciousness; the ideology of capitalism; capitalism and alienation; social classes and class conflict; the dynamics of revolution; the future society. While this arrangement does not permit an appreciation of the gradual development of Marx's thought, it facilitates reference to specific subject matters.

No selection can possibly replace the study of the complete texts, but this book serves at least to suggest the immense richness of the materials that still await publication in English. It is symptomatic of the times that the most obscure writings of medieval theologians are being splendidly translated and that no end of uninformed "anti-Marxist" dribble comes off Brit-

ish and American presses each year, while no press has yet seen fit to publish an edition of the most powerful social thinker of the nineteenth century.

The editors have prefaced their selections with a lengthy essay on Marx's social thought that is in many ways an admirable introduction yet is open to serious criticism. Bottomore and Rubel have chosen to emphasize those contributions of Marx which they consider to be of special relevance to modern sociology, and with this initial bias there is no reason to quarrel. Yet they feel also the need to claim that the "real Marx" is an empirical sociologist; and that, to say the least, is a dubious assertion. In their effort to prove their thesis they are led to minimize the influence of Hegel and the German idealist tradition on Marx's thought, and to stress those elements in the Marxian corpus that are derived from British and French social thought. They claim that Hegel was a philosopher who "took no account of real social phenomena," and that Marx, on the other hand, was not a philosopher of history but an empirical sociologist and a pragmatic moralist.

Some years ago Herbert Marcuse in his brilliant *Reason and Revolution* (which the authors fail to cite in their bibliography) showed conclusively the many strands of continuity between the main themes of Marx and Hegel, at the same time that he attempted to prove that modern empirical sociology and Marxism had nothing in common. Bottomore and Rubel now defend the reverse thesis. Both interpretations are equally untenable. It is misleading to assert that Marx used only a Hegelian style of exposition in writing *Capital* while his method was strictly empiri-

cal—whatever that may mean; and it is similarly misleading to deny that Marxian sociology in many striking ways anticipated and complements modern sociology. To try to compress a complex thinker into a single mold is always a fallacious procedure. Marx's thought is a synthesis of many elements and none of these in isolation represent the "real Marx." To make Marx more acceptable to modern sociologists by denying his immense indebtedness, for better or for worse, to the currently unfashionable philosophical tradition which culminated in Hegel is perhaps good salesmanship, but it is bad intellectual history.

But whatever quarrel one may have with their introduction, we owe a great debt of gratitude to the editors and the translator. Let's soon have an American edition.

LEWIS COSER

BOOKS RECEIVED

THE DARK EYE IN AFRICA, by Laurens van der Post. William Morrow & Co., Inc., New York. 1955. \$3.00.—The well-known writer on Africa lectures his audience on the nature and meaning of the African continent; a work with mystical overtones.

THE GENESIS OF PLATO'S THOUGHT, by Alban Dewes Winspear. S. A. Russell Publisher. New York. \$5.00.—Reprint of a critical reexamination of Plato's *Republic* which originally appeared in 1940.

YEARBOOK OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST LABOUR MOVEMENT, 1956-1957, edited by Julius Braunthal under the auspices of the Socialist International and the Asian Socialist Conference. I. R. Maxwell & Company, Ltd. 122 East 55 Street, New York City. 63 shillings.—A reference book containing all relevant data about the Socialist parties throughout the world and their statements on principles and policies.

Miscellany

First Hearing on "Subversive List"

Gordon Haskell

EIGHT YEARS AGO the Truman administration issued the first list of governmentally proscribed organizations in American history. At the time the Attorney General's "subversive list" was published, the proscription was supposed to extend only to government jobs for persons who had been members of or "sympathetically associated" with the listed organizations. It was an administrative measure which formed the corner-stone of the "loyalty and security" program.

Since then, the Attorney General's list has become an effective blacklist covering wide areas of American life. Private industries doing "classified" work for the government use it to fire suspect workers. It is applied to university research projects subsidized by the government. Members of the armed forces with excellent military records have been denied honorable discharges solely because they had belonged to listed organizations *before* induction. The entertainment industry blacklist uses the list as a guide.

That is the more or less official side of the matter. But the impact of the list on freedom of political association has gone far deeper than a summary of the areas of its application would indicate. Ordinary citizens, whose occupations have no connection with governmental affairs, are reluctant to subscribe to the publications or attend meetings of the listed organizations. Members of such organizations can expect visits from FBI agents, as can curious subscribers to their press who have neither joined nor are particularly sympathetic to their views.

How did the government go about deciding the basis for this list of organizations? To this day, no one outside the Department of Justice really knows. The government has refused to state its criteria for declaring an organization "subversive." At one time, the list was divided into three categories: "Communist," "Subversive" and "seek to alter the form

of government of the United States by unconstitutional means." That gave a hint of what *might* be involved. But in the more recent versions, these categories have been dropped in favor of a simple alphabetical listing.

After eight years of persistent effort, three of the organizations have finally succeeded in getting a hearing from the Department of Justice which cast a glaring light on just what it means to have the government set itself up as an arbiter of political views. Although a revision of the government's procedure was made in April 1953 which provides for hearings for listed organizations which want them, the first such hearing was concluded on July 11, 1956.

The organizations which finally got a hearing are the Workers Party (discontinued in 1949), its successor, the Independent Socialist League, and their former youth organization, the Socialist Youth League. These are revolutionary socialist propaganda groups which have been vigorously anti-Stalinist from the day the Workers Party was founded as the result of a split in the Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party in 1940. The ISL (which term we will use as synonymous for the three organizations) has a few hundred members who devote themselves primarily to publishing *Labor Action*, a weekly, and *The New International*, a quarterly. It proudly proclaims itself a socialist organization in the tradition of the revolutionary wing of Marxism.

The Justice Department's hearing was conducted by a hearing examiner who performs a similar function for the Subversive Activities Control Board. From the outset, the government refused to define its use of the term "Communist," and after much prodding stated that in effect its charge against the organization boils down to the single assertion that they advocate overthrow of the government by force and violence. Every effort by Joseph L. Rauh, the attorney who had been secured for the organizations through the help of the Workers Defense League, to get the government to state the theory of its case, or to demonstrate the relevance of its "evidence", failed.

The government's first witness was Professor Geroid T. Robinson of Columbia University, who spent three days on

the witness stand reading and interpreting excerpts from Lenin. Under cross-examination, Robinson admitted that he had never so much as heard of the organizations before government agents approached him a few weeks before the hearing. He admitted that he was totally unfamiliar with their press. But, he said, he knew all about Leninism, and insofar as the organizations had at one time or another referred to themselves as favoring the "basic principles" of "Leninism," he was an expert on what they really stand for.

When Rauh pointed out that *his* interpretation of Leninism might be altogether different from that of the ISL, Robinson replied that this was impossible, since all experts on Leninism agree on exactly what it is. From this exposed position he was forced to beat a hasty retreat when passages from the writings of Bertram Wolfe (a man whose authority of Leninism he had accepted) were read to him which differed markedly in interpretation from his selected emphases.

Nor was that all. Robinson was asked whether, in his opinion, a Leninist organization would support the present regime in Russia as a socialist society, and would have supported the Stalinist coup in Czechoslovakia as a practical application of Leninism. He replied that there could be no question about it, as all that was pretty much pure Leninism. Informed that the ISL took a diametrically opposite point of view, he had to admit that in this respect, at least, they were not "Leninist" as he understands the term.

The rest of the government's "proof" against the organizations consisted in submitting passages from their voluminous literature. Much of the material dealt with their opposition to the American government's policies in World War II and the Korean War. Other material showed that the organizations had attacked the capitalist system and had advocated socialism. In short, from the government's compilation of quotations it became clear that in the minds of its lawyers, subversion is equated to any vigorous advocacy of a new economic and political system.

THE ORGANIZATIONS then presented their

side of the case. Harry Fleischman, former national secretary of the Socialist Party, Dwight Macdonald, Norman Thomas, and Daniel Bell all testified that though they disagree with many ISL views, they know that it does not advocate overthrow of the government by force and violence. In addition to these expert witnesses, members or former members of the ISL testified to the damaging effects they had suffered due to the listing of the organizations.

Finally, Max Shachtman, national chairman of the ISL, spent over ten days on the witness stand under direct and cross examination setting forth the history, views and activities of the organizations. Hours upon hours were spent in discussions of some of the most disputed aspects of the Russian Revolution. Despite Shachtman's repeated protests that his views on this or that event which took place in Russia thirty years ago could have no possible bearing on the "subversiveness" of the organizations, the government attorneys were intent on trying to back up their preposterous claim that the ISL proposes as a "recommended formula" for political action in the United States in 1956 every tactic and policy of the Bolsheviks in 1917!

In the last three days of the hearing, the government was finally able to produce one more "witness," James Burnham, member of the Workers Party for three weeks in 1940, and in recent years one of the editors of the McCarthyite publication *National Review*.

Burnham claimed to know a lot more about the organization than Geroid T. Robinson. To be sure, he could remember few, if any, articles he had read in its press since 1940. Under prodding from Rauh, he finally recalled some articles in *Labor Action* on the Tito regime. How did these articles demonstrate that the ISL is for the violent overthrow of the American government? Burnham replied: the article employed a class analysis of the Tito government. Implicit in such analysis is a class view of society. People who have a class view of society "must be for force and violence..." And, if you find this hard to believe, here is the record:

Rauh: "You say it is implicit. What is explicit?"

Burnham: "The class analysis of the Tito government and its relations with Russia..."

Rauh: "Because they use a class analysis of the Tito government, on that you build your case that they're for the overthrow of the U.S. government by force and violence?"

Burnham: "Not exclusively... It is indicative..."

Burnham's expert testimony got worse as he went along, and ended when he admitted on the stand that against Communists "you lie as part of your duty to your country" if this is necessary in the interests of the nation. The government's whole case was based on nothing more solid than Burnham's "evidence" that the organizations advocate the violent overthrow of democratic governments as an inference from an implication of an hypothesis about a theory of class relations in society!

THERE IS no telling how long it will be before the Attorney General finally issues a ruling based on the findings of the hearing examiner. The government's whole attitude in this proceeding has been such that neither the organizations nor their counsel have much hope that it will be settled short of the courts. In the meantime, the ISL and the Workers Defense League need all the support they can get from every person concerned with civil liberties.

Russia and the Monthly Review

IT WAS ONLY after the second world war that one became aware of a new political type—the public figure who spoke favorably of Russia not because he had illusions about the nature of Stalinism but because he did not. One had become accustomed to Stalinists who sincerely believed that Russia was a democratic and proletarian state; people who in some corrupted way still gave formal allegiance to democratic and humane values. But now, in the work of such writers as Frederick Schumann, the traditional democratic rhetoric was brushed aside and Stalinism justified as a power structure that was functional and enduring.

With time there arose an even more dubious type: one who suffered no illusions about democracy in Russia, found acceptable the rationalization of Stalinism in terms of "power," but then—and here is the pinch of novelty—identified this mode of thought with socialism. In France the breed is numerous; there are sufficient examples in England; and in America the group centered around the *Monthly Review*, a magazine edited by Paul Sweezy and Leo Huberman, provides pure specimens.

In a previous DISSENT Lewis Coser and I attempted to describe the "left authoritarian." It may expedite the argument to follow if I quote a passage:

Marx spoke of "the categorical imperative that all conditions must be revolutionized in which man is a debased, an enslaved, an abandoned, a contemptible being." The intellectual tendency of "left authoritarianism" prefers to speak of the tempo of Russian industrialization. Marx said that the great evil of capitalism was that it "alienated" man from his work and his self. "Left authoritarianism" prefers to neglect the question of whether the economic expansion it finds so admirable in Russia has led to an increase or decrease in the "alienation" of the Russian workers and intellectuals. Marx insisted that societies must be seen in their social totality, he called his *Capital* a study in political economy, he measured the claims of societies by their concrete human consequences. "Left authoritarianism," eager to find some grounds for declaring Russian society "progressive" and for anticipating its "democratization," must abstract the element of industrial productivity from its social context... ["Authoritarians of the Left," DISSENT, Winter 1955.]

Predictably, the recent events in Russia have given the *Monthly Review* group a rather heady stimulant. In a long editorial in their July-August issue the editors celebrate the Khrushchev dispensation and declare their continuing faith in the "socialism" of Russia. Though in the past they seldom brought themselves to more than the faintest criticism of Russian despotism, they now feel free to declare that Stalinist Russia, while "in

its aims and achievement... superhuman," was in "its methods and attitude toward the rights and dignity of the individual... subhuman." One might wonder how a society which in its attitude toward the dignity of the individual was subhuman, could also be superhuman in its aims; but let that pass.

What should not be allowed to pass is that with all their claim to being independent, Sweezy and Huberman even now do not go as far as Togliatti went in raising crucial questions about the nature of the Russian state, nor are they capable of a fraction of the indignation expressed by Howard Fast after Khrushchev's "revelations."

Why? Without becoming infatuated with the vision of Howard Fast as a democrat, I can believe that in some curious way Fast had *illusions* about Stalinist Russia: that is, as an orthodox Stalinist he seems really to have been shocked by Khrushchev's speech. But Sweezy and Huberman, can they be shocked? They, whose loyalty to Russian "socialism" rests upon a self-validating theory about the virtues of industrialization in a nationalized economy? (Russia is socialist because the means of production are nationalized; the means of production are nationalized because Russia is socialist.)

THEY WHO WERE never deluded cannot now be shocked. And that is one reason why, even now, they do not go one step beyond Khrushchev in raising questions about the past: they permit themselves the boldness of calling the murder of the Yiddish writers "outright barbarism" (*why did they not say this a few years ago?*) but still have not a word to utter about the Moscow trials, the murder of Trotsky or any other Stalinist atrocity.

They do, however, try to cope with the question of the one-party dictatorship. As civilized Americans they would no doubt like to see more than one party in Russia, particularly if they could persuade Khrushchev to agree to it. But as radicals caught up in the technological interpretation of history they are not excessively disturbed by the fact that Russia remains a one party dictatorship. They write:

a) "There are *many* other factors beside the number of parties which

affect the policies and evolution of the regime..."

b) "Many people in the West, including not a few left-wing socialists, take it for granted that the essential change [toward making Russia a democratic society] will have to be a shift from a one-party toward a multi-party system. This might indeed turn out to be the case, but we think it shows a certain lack of political imagination to assume that it must be so. Couldn't there also be, for example, an evolution toward a *no-party* system with novel forms of political representation and expression? What is crucial, after all, is not the number of parties but that people should have the right and the habit of thinking freely and creatively..."

As for a): To be sure, there are many other factors besides the number of parties which affect the policies of a regime. Geography, climate, language, the dictator's digestion, the phases of the moon, etc., etc. But it requires no great profundity to understand that what matters is the *relative valuation* given to such factors. Sweezy and Huberman systematically deny the crucial significance of the one party dictatorship; but in doing so they are contravened by an authority that knows better, namely *Pravda*:

As for our country, the Communist party has been *and will be the only master* of the minds, and thoughts, the spokesman, leader and organizer of the people... [Emphasis added.]

Which leads us to b). No doubt it is conceivable that in a socialist future the party system might "wither away" and democracy achieve a new depth. But does it make any sense to speak of such a development in regard to the Russia that Sweezy and Huberman themselves describe as having been ruled by "oriental despotism" and in which the "oriental" may partly have been eliminated but the "despotism" remains? A nation tortured by the political barbarism that Sweezy and Huberman themselves acknowledge, must surely be wracked by suppressed conflicts that require free public expression through a multiplicity of parties.

FOR ALL THOSE who think like Sweezy

and Huberman, political democracy is a luxury that would be very nice to have in "socialist" Russia but is not at all indispensable. They simply do not understand that in a society where the state owns the basic means of production, the absence of democracy, far from being a mere casual inconvenience, determines the fundamental nature of the regime. For in regard to a country with a statified economy it becomes absurd to suppose that the lack of democracy can be confined to the political or administrative side of things; it is necessarily felt at every level of Russian social life, from the street to the factory, from the school to the family. And that is why the Trotskyist argument (which Sweezy and Huberman vulgarize by omitting Trotsky's revolutionary passion) that Russia needs not a social but a political revolution, is so devoid of meaning: for in a country like Russia a political revolution, if it were at all genuine or extensive, would be a social revolution.

Not once in their lengthy editorial do Sweezy and Huberman say a word about the Russian (or the Polish) working class. For them the process of constructing socialism is not that of mankind, through self-conscious and fraternal participation, building a new society with new values and ideals; it is not a venture in human self-emancipation; it is simply an economic process that occurs independently of the will or intervention of the masses of the population. Given such a conception it becomes unnecessary to inquire what the mode and quality of life is in this "socialist" Russia, or what the concrete relationships are between rulers and ruled.

IT WAS a stroke of bad luck for Sweezy and Huberman that as their reaffirmation of faith in Khrushchev's "socialism" was reaching the newsstands, the revolt of the Poznan workers broke out. With the ruthlessness of a Stalinist regime, the Polish government struck down the workers of Poznan. And here we could see the true image of the kind of radicalism represented by Sweezy and his friends: the radicalism of the blackjack that smashes the skulls of the martyrs of east Berlin, of Vorkuta, of Poznan.

I. H.

The Tragedy at Parris Island

Norman Mailer

OVER THE YEARS, I have had a few mixed feelings about the Marine Corps. It is not easy for me to defend them, yet in a curious way I suppose I respect the Marine Corps more than the Army. Discounting the overdeveloped and often nauseating public relations of the Marines, and the professional braggadocio which makes them our institutional equivalent of Texans-on-a-tear, one can still hardly pride oneself at knowing much about life if one tries to deny that the Marines have been probably our best combat soldiers, and that they have a high number of courageous men in their ranks.

Of course, our generation of sensitive people has begun to deny the proper existence of such virtues as courage, and I would declare this to be one of the abuses of psychoanalysis. Years ago I remember a psychology student telling me that the platoon sergeant in *The Naked and the Dead*, Sam Croft, had exhibited an infantile fixation toward the maternal breast in his compulsion to climb a mountain. Since what was left out of account was precisely the fact that not every man who has such a fixation is capable of the stamina, the will, and the courage to drive a platoon of unwilling men up a mysterious and forbidding mountain, I was left a little more aware of how the new faith can strip from anyone exactly their most striking and admirable human qualities. So, too, with the Marine Corps. I can dislike an institution, I can fear its ultimate dangers, I can detest its moral values, but I feel I give way to the anti-human plague of our time if I fail to recognize such obvious virtues as courage where courage indeed exists.

THE MARINE CORPS, however, is as devoid of moral courage as it is fertile in physical courage, and the latest demonstration of our national vice has been the abominable hypocrisy of the Marine brass about the death of six Marines in a tidal stream in one of the marshes on the Parris Island base. Of course, I don't know what is going to happen as a re-

sult of this, but it would surprise me very little if the drill instructor, Sgt. McKeon, is made the sole villain for an accident which was sooner or later inevitable, given the way the Marine Corps trains its men.

Boot training in the Marine Corps is notorious for its sadism, psychological and physical. I have never met a Marine yet who does not alternately brag and rage about what a son of a bitch his D. I. (Drill Instructor) had been. And the kind of stories one hears, allowing for all due exaggerations, are as psychologically fascinating as some of the back pages in *Psychopathia Sexualis*. For example: a man shaved with a rusty razor by his D. I. because he had not been perfectly clean-shaven at morning inspection, or again a group of five or six Marines forced to strip while their fatigue uniforms, unclean only by military standards, were stamped into mud or sand by the D. I. When the fatigues had been sufficiently ground into the dirt, they were thrown back at the naked recruits, who were told to wash them well enough in half an hour to pass inspection again. All basic training is characterized by its psychological sadism, and while this is hardly the place nor the space to discuss whether there could be a less inhuman method of developing first-rate soldiers, I think the Marine Corps could at least have the supposed American virtue of defending its actions by the honest argument that the results work, rather than pretending that all disciplinary excesses are regrettable and untypical accidents.

A D. I. has to be a tough man—the pressures on him are enormous. He has not only to impose his will on a training platoon of anywhere from 20 to 50 reasonably rough men and boys, but he is under enormous pressure from his officers—every failure of his training platoon is considered his responsibility. If his platoon is inferior to the platoon in the next barracks or the next company street, the D. I. is in trouble, no doubt about that, and of course in compensation for his low salary and hard work, the D. I. has only his power, threatened from above and below.

Now, at Parris Island, the accident covers a mystery. Because what in the name

of heaven was a training platoon doing on a SUNDAY night march? Even in boot training, when the men are restricted to their base, they would at least be allowed to wander around the post on a Sunday night. Unless they had been restricted to their quarters for the week-end, Sgt. McKeon could never have rounded them up on Sunday evening for a Sunday-night hike. If I'm right, and McKeon's platoon had been restricted to quarters for the week-end, then the probable reason is that they failed to pass their Saturday-morning inspection. A crime. Two or three men in the platoon had probably come up with small flaws in their equipment.

For anyone who has not been in the Armed Forces, the psychological terror of a Saturday inspection in training can hardly be explained. I know I never felt so insignificant and so without dignity as I would feel in the five minutes before the inspecting officer reached my bunk, and I believe I ended up a poorer soldier for the experience. If one is going to be a good soldier, one has to have a little self-respect, and cringing inwardly like a whipped dog over such inconsequential as whether my cot had been made tautly, or if my footlocker had every piece of equipment laid out at perfect right angles, remained as a humiliating memory for many years. There is a psychological destruction in so humiliating men which is far greater than the worst rigors of long cruel training marches, where at least one can have the self-respect of having endured, of having made it.

Sgt. McKeon was probably as driving and sadistic as any other D. I.—a D. I. can hardly be anything else given his kind of work—but I wonder if the explanation behind the death of these six trainees will not come down to something so simple and yet so large as a poorly made bed, a platoon restricted to quarters, an enraged D. I., smarting under the fear and humiliation of a mark against his training record, and therefore so angry as to mete out the unusual punishment (on himself as well, of course) of a long hike on a Sunday night. That it ended in death was an accident, and in the military sense just sheer bad luck—the Marines at Parris Island have been led across more than one strange

river by night—but if one wants to look for the blame, why not place it where it belongs? The Marine Corps gives free rein to its D. I.'s, encourages their sadism while officers turn their backs, and then the brass has not the moral courage to defend its methods head-on.

My guess is that Sgt. McKeon is going to be the seventh victim of this, and will be courtmartialed for one reason or another. The subsequent whitewash of the high Marine brass at Parris Island will ignore completely the one real mystery in the affair: why was McKeon's platoon out on a Sunday night march? It is the question to ask, and I would like to know the answer. Let us see if we ever get the answer.

(Written before the widely-reported trial of Sgt. McKeon, the above appeared originally in the Village Voice.)

Some Critics Of Dissent

THE SUPPORTERS OF DISSENT, it is pleasant to know, tend to be skeptical, dissatisfied, critical. They do not permit us to relax into self-satisfaction, and there are times when I have a vision in which they line up before our door, insistently demanding answers, answers...

But we can take comfort of a kind from the fact that our critics and opponents find DISSENT interesting or at least irritating. Granville Hicks, in the summer issue of the *American Scholar*, devotes a long article mainly to a critical analysis of DISSENT and its editors. Written with his usual sense of fairness, the article attacks DISSENT from what might be called the position of Uncomfortable Liberalism: Hicks retains some radical impulses but very few radical opinions. In any case, our readers should examine his article for themselves.

A critic of another kind is Mrs. Diana Trilling. As a leading official of the American Committee for Cultural Freedom (ACCF), an organization largely devoted in this country to cold-war publicity among intellectuals, Mrs. Trilling seems often to behave like the "general secretary" of a radical sect whose main joy in life is hunting for deviations among the other sects and chastising those who

stray from the proper "line." Thus in the July *Commentary* she has rushed into a reckless polemic against Philip Rahv simply because Rahv, in a previous review of a Graham Greene novel, had not belabored Greene's "anti-Americanism" to the extent she thinks proper. Mrs. Trilling is answered by Rahv quite as she deserves to be, but what interests us at the moment is a remarkable passage about DISSENT which Mrs. Trilling managed to drag into her article:

...we have today the spectacle of a magazine like DISSENT, whose polemic is based not upon intellectual cogency but upon the emotional intimidation of its readers, creating more anxiety in the liberal community than our continuing efforts at liberal reason can allay. And it is noteworthy of DISSENT that there is no reasonable opinion it assaults more violently than the opinion that American democracy, for all its faults, warrants our defense unless it be the equally reasonable opinion that the single greatest threat to freedom is Soviet Communism.

To argue this passage would be pointless, since Mrs. Trilling is far too sophisticated in these matters not to realize that her description of DISSENT is deficient in good faith. As for our capacity to arouse "anxiety in the liberal community," she is simply letting her fantasies run away with her. If it will soothe her nerves, we can reassure her that she greatly overestimates our influence.

Still, if Mrs. Trilling is really convinced that DISSENT is engaged in a large-scale "emotional intimidation" of the "liberal community," there are ready means of correction at her disposal. She need merely write an article, saying whatever she pleases and with whatever vehemence she feels necessary, which we of DISSENT would guarantee in advance to print in our pages. In that way, she will be performing a useful service—perhaps even a therapeutic act!—for both the "liberal community" and our readers. Mrs. Trilling need only say the word. After all, it is no small responsibility to be able to ease the anxieties of human beings who otherwise face only the prospect of continued intimidation.

I. H.

LETTERS

Democracy and Planning

Editors:

I read Stuart Hampshire's article, "In Defense of Radicalism," (DISSENT, Spring '56) with great interest and agree essentially with his notions of the function of the radical in society. However, Mr. Hampshire seems to have overlooked the conditions which produced the concept of freedom in the 18th century and consequently bypassed one of the basic problems of 20th century society, especially as viewed from the ideological framework of the socialist. This is the problem of social planning. Take, for example, the changing nature of the technological apparatus of our economy which involves, if effective mobility is to be obtained, the pushing, though not necessarily by force, of people into certain job areas.

Now if we assume a socialist government advocates the planning of the economy and at the same time espouses complete freedom of choice for the individual, we are, it seems, beset with an inconsistency. We can argue that the people have given the socialist government the right to place the people in jobs or geographic areas where they are needed even if it is somewhat distasteful; but if this individual is one of the minority who voted against the "planning" regime he may rebel against being placed in some area not of his choice...

One can say we can still give minorities the greatest possible choice, but this seems to be a rather nebulous stand, if not entirely begging the question. Similarly, "to respect the right of minorities to vote and equality before the laws"

seems to me inadequate conditions to guarantee individual freedom. Mr. Hampshire's defense of the individual resembles slightly that of the AMA, which stems from not only what they think are their vested interests but also a basic misconception of what the prerequisites of freedom really are, namely an efficiently working economy capable of producing material abundance and at the same time furnishing the institutional organs which can extend this abundance to the people in mass. I don't feel one can argue that these vacuums that arise can be filled by offering additional rewards to entice individuals into the needy areas, because additional rewards imply additional status and thus provide the instrument for the precipitation of a new dominant class.

In that I don't feel qualified to challenge, to any great extent, Mr. Hampshire's article, I send this letter more in the form of a question. How does he recommend the reconciliation of freedom of choice and equality in this fringe area with the freedom that can only be obtained from an economy which both produces and distributes abundantly; which in turn involves a high degree of centralized planning? BILL HARRELL

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A LETTER TO PICASSO

Continued from page 340

the exuberance of pure color was in them. A year later all the children attending this art school were subjected to what was called ideological education. They were to be changed into ten year old adults, to portray in dull and drab colors tractors and May Day parades.

I NEED HARDLY TELL YOU what your name, quite appropriately annexed by the Stalinists, has been used to cover up. Almost all that needs to be known about this is now being said in the East. Since you are unacquainted with the Central and Eastern European languages, I will translate a few passages for you.

In the spring of 1956 a Warsaw writer wrote the following:

The history of philosophy knows few eras in which intolerance was pushed so far as during these past few years. The persecution of critical thought at the beginning of the Renaissance and later on in the 17th and 18th centuries appears almost idyllic when compared with the time through which we have lived and which, we can say with relief, is on its way out.

An eminent poet of Warsaw has told of his experiences.

In 1949 or 1950 I recall an editor deleting the word "love" from one of my poems on the grounds that, "It is not love, but hate that we preach." And to intimidate me, he added that I might be suspected of deviation because of this!

In 1953 I published a poem, moderate in tone and full of tact, called "Truth and Poetry." Exception was taken to the following formulation: 'Poetry, in order to be true to itself, needs to join a dialogue with truth. But with what truth; if truth has already been revealed for eternity?'

Another writer declared, "We are guilty of lying," and he asks himself:

Were we really so completely cut off from all information about the deprivations and crimes of the period just passed that now, like those Germans who, after the arrival of the Allied troops, calmly said, "Auschwitz? We never heard of it until you told us about it," we have the right to say the same?

Now imagine, Picasso, your biography containing the following passage: "At the height of Hitler's power, Picasso painted his portrait!" You did Stalin's portrait and it provoked the Party's disapproval because it did not conform to the rules of photographic resemblance. You had dared to attempt more: to bring out the leader's soul, a fine fellow filled with love for humanity. Do you realize the ridiculousness of this?

If you answer us by saying, "After all, Stalin wasn't that bad," you deny the testimony published in the press of the East by people who know of what they write.

For years I have been carrying within me the story of a human heart; a story entrusted to me in deepest secrecy. I can tell it to you now, Picasso, because the person in question can now speak aloud. She is a Russian woman, of a goodness and purity whose quality is rarely found among other peoples. She once lived in Moscow, where she studied at the University and worked in a state enterprise. She had married a young Communist whom she loved very much. A child was born to them. Just as that moment—it was 1937—her husband was arrested and disappeared into the dark void of the concentration camp. She herself—please note this—could count on nobody's pity or help. She even had to pretend that nothing had happened and to appear each morning at her office, smiling and satisfied! For had they known about her husband's arrest, they would have thrown her out—and there was the child. Then followed year after year of vain hope. It doesn't matter when and where I met her; somewhere in Eastern Europe. All she knew was that her husband was alive, in a camp near the Polar Circle. Count her days and nights, multiply them by 8, 10, 15 millions of similar human stories and you will know to what political use you have been putting your glory as a painter!

It is insane, isn't it, for me to associate your name with history's filth. But is it insane? If you want to know the judgment rendered against the great names of the West by these men East of the Elba, here it is:

Picasso, Sartre or Joliot-Curie—they have to be taken as they are. Responsibility and knowledge of the facts are not their strong points. They are fooling around; their views, sympathies, antipathies are dictated by their restricted surroundings. It doesn't cost them a cent.

Such contempt seems to me unjust and marked by that attitude of superiority which suffrance inspires. Why should you and so many others be exempted from obligations weighing upon all of us?

IN WRITING THIS LETTER, I yield to a desire that has long haunted me; a desire particularly strong at a time when you could have had me as a dinner table neighbor—for example, in 1948, in Poland, during the Congress for Peace. Our reasons may be good or bad, I said to myself then, but our choice lies between submission or exile. But they, the Westerners, what drives them to act like buffoons? Should they be considered a living confirmation of the thesis that history punishes the bourgeois by depriving them of their reason? Such were the thoughts

of one of those who, outwardly, showed you only politeness and enthusiasm.

This letter, then, comes some years late. But even a short time ago, in the political circles surrounding you, each denunciation of the Stalin régime was branded as the work of forgers, traitors and reactionaries. Or else "historical necessity" was invoked. Now, you can, if you like, say that I am motivated by a natural villainy; but the evidence will not change. As for "historical necessity," what's left of it if it served as a mask to the aberration who nearly handed Russia over to Hitler?

I accuse you, Picasso, and not only you, but all the artists and intellectuals of the West who let themselves be trapped by words. In that period of cruelties and sufferings, all of you, free as you were to choose, chose the most prudent conformism. It gave you—perhaps also your conscience—an air of men belonging to the side of progress. But in fact, your weight added to the balance and deprived of all hope, those in the East who did not want to submit to the absurd. No one can say what would have been the consequence of a categorical protest voiced by all of you against the official doctrine imposed upon art, or against the Rajk trial. If the support you gave to terror counted, then your indignation would also have counted. It is therefore just that your irresponsibility be pointed out so that your future biographers may not forget it.

Translated by HEDWIG PACHTER

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